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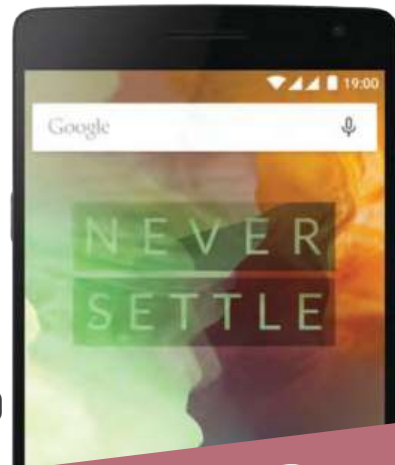
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November 2015

iPhone 6s – just a faded memory



As the hype over the latest iPhone 6s starts to subside we're left feeling underwhelmed by Apple's storage configuration strategy.

By now every sentient human being on the face of the Earth will now know that Apple has launched a new iPhone. The iPhone 6s is the 11th model introduced since 2007 and every year expectations are that the world's richest company will produce a product of such gigantic technology as to leave us all speechless.

This is an unrealistic and unfair assumption. However, Apple itself is to blame for the expectations and hype that its new iPhone releases engender. The iPhone 6s is a tweak of the 6 with some extra features that you may or may not find will add perfection to your life.

The bottom line is – if you're still on an iPhone 5 or 4s the new device is worth your consideration. Owners of the 6 and 6 Plus will need to wait another year before their saliva glands start working over time. What we can fault Apple for is its continuing absurd attitude and strategy regarding memory.

The iPhone 6s (and Plus) comes in a base 16GB configuration at a time when every high-end rival smartphone manufacturer would not dream of putting out any device with less than 32GB of onboard memory. For another £80 Apple will sell you an iPhone 6s with 64GB.

We'd go out on a limb and say that no-one should buy the 16GB version, especially as Apple's own software of iOS and built-in apps takes up around 4GB of that. Consider that a minute of 4K video (now standard on the 6s) requires 300MB of storage and you can see that 16GB is not nearly enough base memory.

Especially after you've dumped 1,000 or so songs onto the device and loaded up a fistful of apps and memory-hungry games. Also the 6s has a 12MP camera. So high-res pix will take up more space than before. Add in the Live Photos feature (which adds a second or two of live video to each photograph) and 12GB will be filled very quickly.

It's no secret that Apple pays pennies for storage. A base model with 32GB would have barely added £15 to the price. We can only assume that Apple is forcing savvy users to fork out for the 64GB and 128GB models at a considerable price hike. Or that it wants to 'encourage' users to pay iCloud storage subscriptions. The production of a 16GB iPhone 6s makes no sense apart from bolstering Apple profits.

Loss of memory. We're not impressed.

The What Mobile team

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We've got a huge prize this month courtesy of the guys over at Currys. They've been kind enough to give us a brand new Samsung Galaxy Tab S2, which we'll be reviewing in the next issue of What Mobile and then giving away to one lucky reader. This is one of the best competition prizes we've had in a long time, with a retail price of £400!

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Sweating the small stuff: 1. The promoter of this competition is Clark White Publishing Ltd. 2. The competition is open to all UK residents aged 18 years or over, excluding employees of What Mobile, all participating companies, its agents or families and any company associated with this competition. 3. By entering, all entrants will be deemed to have accepted these rules. 4. All entry instructions form a part of the terms and conditions. 5. Closing date: 5 October 2015. 6. Only one entry per email/IP address will be accepted. 7. The correct winning entry will be selected randomly by the administrator of the What Mobile Facebook page. The winner, who must be a UK resident, will be sent a PNY PowerPack. 8. No cash alternative or other device will be offered. 9. No correspondence will be entered into except that the name of the winner will be available upon written request. 10. You accept that the competition prize may be an open box item that was previously reviewed in the magazine by one of our reporters

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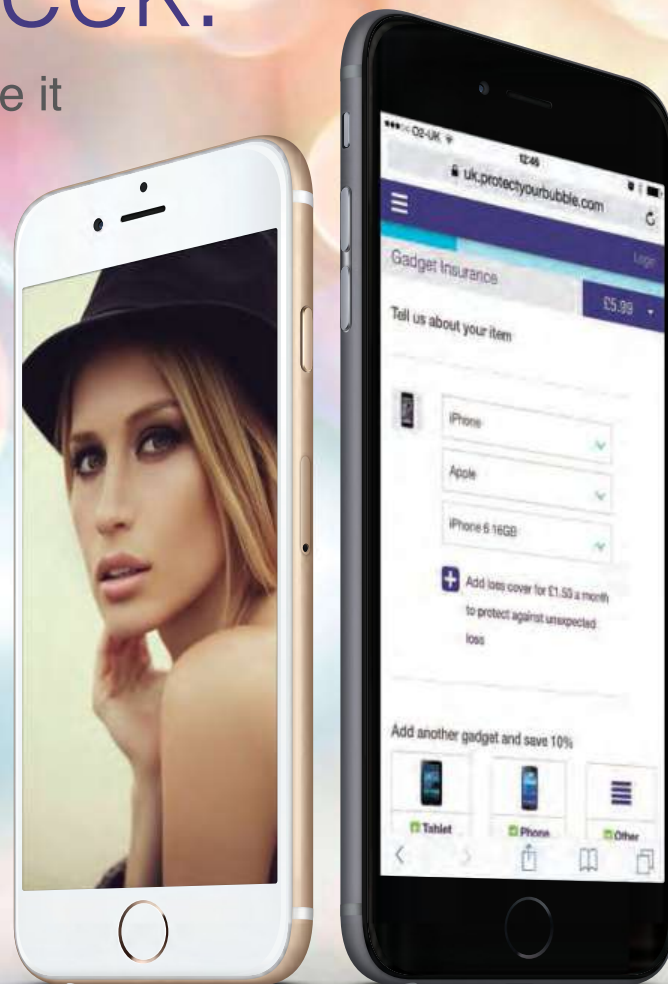
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With so many smartwatch announcements in the past month, it has been hard to keep up. We've picked four of the best and given them a thorough first look.

Smartwatches and wearables in general were hot topic at the IFA Berlin event this year, with a clear shift to more 'realistic' looking smartwatches. Blocky square designs are old hat, with a shift to more traditional circular designs that mimic the appearance of real watches.

Asus ZenWatch 2

Aggressively priced at only €169 for the 45mm version and €149 for the larger 49mm model, the Asus ZenWatch 2 will be available from October in a variety of finishes. Our personal favourite is the one above, which looks very similar to those retro Casio watches from the 1980s. The 2.5D Gorilla Glass 3 gives it a subtle curve so it sits more flush on the wrist, which helps to overcome the slightly large watch face. It is also rated as IP67 water resistant, meaning it can withstand the occasional splash of liquid. It is worth noting that the ZenWatch 2 does not come with a biometric sensor, so fitness information will be limited to the pedometer only.

The larger version has a 1.63-inch panel with a resolution of 320 x 320, which equates to roughly 278 pixels-per-inch. The smaller version has a 1.45-inch panel with a lower resolution of 280 x 280, which is around 273 PPI. Both versions come with AMOLED displays for better power efficiency. Running on a Snapdragon 400 processor with 512MB RAM, it manages to keep up with the more expensive models. Internal storage is 4GB. The battery is 400 mAh, with Asus quoting a usage time of 2.5 days in ambient use. It also ships with a portable charge pack in the box, which will provide extra juice on the go should you need it.

The ZenWatch 2 will launch in October with a choice of three straps – either metal, fabric or leather.



Motorola Moto 360 2

As one of the first companies to buck the trend of square phones, Motorola had a lot to prove with its update of the popular Moto 360 smartwatch. Unsurprisingly, it carries on the theme of a circular watch face but manages to improve on a few areas where the original fell short. A 46mm version is available (the same as last year's) which is now aimed at men, plus there's also a new smaller 42mm version available for women. The small cut-out at the bottom where the ambient light sensor sits has been carried across from the previous design, though the main navigation button has now moved to the 2 o'clock position.

The screen is still an LCD panel, which isn't as power efficient when compared with OLED displays. Resolution has increased to 360 x 330 on the larger model and 360 x 325 on the smaller model. It uses a 1.2GHz Snapdragon 400 processor and 512MB RAM, much like every other smartwatch currently available. One trump card up its sleeve is wireless charging, which is included as standard on the new Moto 360. The 300 mAh battery is slightly lower than its competitors and the LCD screen is a big drain, with Motorola only quoting 'up to one day' with the ambient light sensor turned on.

It is available from the end of September with prices quoted at \$300 (£197) for the smaller version and \$350 (£230) for the larger variant. There's also a sport variant, which has an outdoor readable display and on-board GPS.



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Huawei Watch

This stylish looking number is Huawei's first foray into smartwatches and it's an excellent attempt. Available in a 42mm version only, it has a premium finish and quick-release band for easily changing over straps. Multiple straps are available in an all manner of materials, including metal mesh, leather and traditional chain links. The screen is protected by Sapphire glass, making it tougher than other smartwatch devices. It is also jam-packed full of sensors, with a heart rate monitor, motion sensor, gyroscope and accelerometer. As a nice additional touch, Huawei has also included a magnetic charging pack in the box which fully recharges the battery in only 90 minutes.

The Huawei watch has a 1.4-inch AMOLED display with the highest resolution of any wearable currently available. The 400 x 400 pixel resolution gives it an excellent score of around 286 pixels-per-inch, which is very close to the elusive 300 dpi print standard. It's also one of the few smartwatches to work with both major operating systems, with iOS 8.2+ and Android 4.3+ supported. Internally, the specifications are much the same as the rest. It has a 1.2GHz Snapdragon 400 CPU and 512MB RAM, plus a decent 300 mAh battery. Huawei says that the average life of the device should be about 1.5 days, which is likely due to the benefits of using an AMOLED screen.

It will be available in October for roughly £300, though premium models are expected to cost more.



Samsung Gear S2

This could well be the watch that stole the show in Berlin. The Samsung Gear S2 won't be cheap but it is the closest people will get to an ordinary watch. At only 11.4mm thick, it manages to avoid the bulky design of other smartwatches in favour of something which feels much more comfortable to wear. Two versions will be available when it goes on sale in October – the Gear S2 Classic and standard Gear S2. The latter comes with the benefit of user replaceable straps. The most unique feature of the Gear S2 is the navigation dial, which sits around the edges of the bezel. The majority of the UI navigation can be done by spinning the dial around the edge of the screen, which feels remarkably natural and intuitive.

Size differences are almost identical, with the classic being slightly smaller than the standard Gear. Both have the same 1.2-inch AMOLED display with a resolution of 360 x 360 pixels, which equates to a sizeable 306 pixels-per-inch. They also both come with 4GB of included storage and 512MB RAM. The processor is somewhat underpowered compared to the competition, with a 1GHz dual core chip. However, most of the current smartwatches are overpowered for what they actually do. The more frugal processor helps the 300mAh battery last for an impressive 2-3 days.

Both devices run on the latest version of the Tizen operating system and do not support Android Wear, which could be a deal breaker for some.

However, this is also the first Samsung watch that will pair with non-Samsung devices. Any smartphone running Android 4.4 should be able to use it, though certain features such as Samsung Pay won't work.

The Samsung Gear S2 will be released in October.



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Sony Xperia Z5

Sony showed up to this year's IFA conference in Berlin all guns blazing, revealing an entirely new range of Xperia Z5 smartphones.

The updated Z5 range encompasses three models – the standard Z5, the Z5 Compact and the Z5 Premium. Sony hasn't really done much with the aesthetics in the past few years and, as expected, the new devices pretty much follow the same themes of old.

IDENTICAL DESIGN

All of the new models look incredibly similar to the previous range,

with an identical design aside from some very subtle differences. The new models are fully IP65/IP68 waterproof resistant up to a depth of 1.5m and now sport an updated power button on the side which doubles as a fingerprint reader. The glass rear has also been dropped in favour of a matte metal finish, which is likely a result of

the waterproofing. In terms of size, the Xperia Z5 measures 146mm x 72 mm x 7.3mm and weighs a fairly standard 154g. The Xperia Z5 Compact is obviously smaller, measuring 127mm x 65mm x 8.9mm and weighing only 138g. As the daddy of the group, the Xperia Z5 Premium is understandably the biggest. It measures 154mm x 76mm x 7.8mm and weighs in at a hefty 180g.

Internally, there's also little change aside from some core upgrades. All three devices run on the latest Qualcomm Snapdragon 810, the same chip which featured in the now defunct Xperia Z3+. Both the Xperia Z5 and Z5 Premium ship with 3GB RAM while the Xperia Z5 Compact comes with a lesser 2GB. A major selling point of the Xperia Z5 Premium is that it is the first smartphone to ship with a 4K screen. The 5.5-inch display has an effective resolution of 3,840 x 2,160 which equates to an eye-watering 806 pixels-per-inch. Such a display is obviously impressive, though it remains to be seen what kind of impact this will have on the overall battery life. For the other two devices, the results are more mundane. The regular Xperia Z5 ships with a 5.2-inch full HD display much like last time, while the smaller Xperia Z5 Compact ships with a lesser 4.6-inch 720p panel.

CAMERA BOOST

The rear camera has perhaps gotten the biggest bump across the range, with all three models using the same 23 megapixel Exmor RS sensor. Physical sensor size remains a large 1/2.3 inches while the auto-focusing technology has been upgraded to allow speeds of only 0.03 seconds. It's also capable of full 4K video capture, so those who buy the Xperia Z5 Premium will be able to

take advantage of the improved screen resolution instantly. The front camera has also gotten a big bump, with a 5 megapixel sensor that features 1080p video recording capabilities and a 25mm wide-angle lens for those tricky group selfies.

Battery life across the range looks very good on paper, with the Xperia Z5 Premium housing a huge 3,430 mAh battery, the regular Xperia Z5 2,900 mAh and the Xperia Z5 Compact 2,700 mAh. All devices will run on the latest version of Android 5.1.1 Lollipop and will feature expandable memory. The Sony Xperia Z5 range is available now with prices starting at £429 for the Z5 Compact, £549 for the Z5 and £629 for the Z5 Premium.



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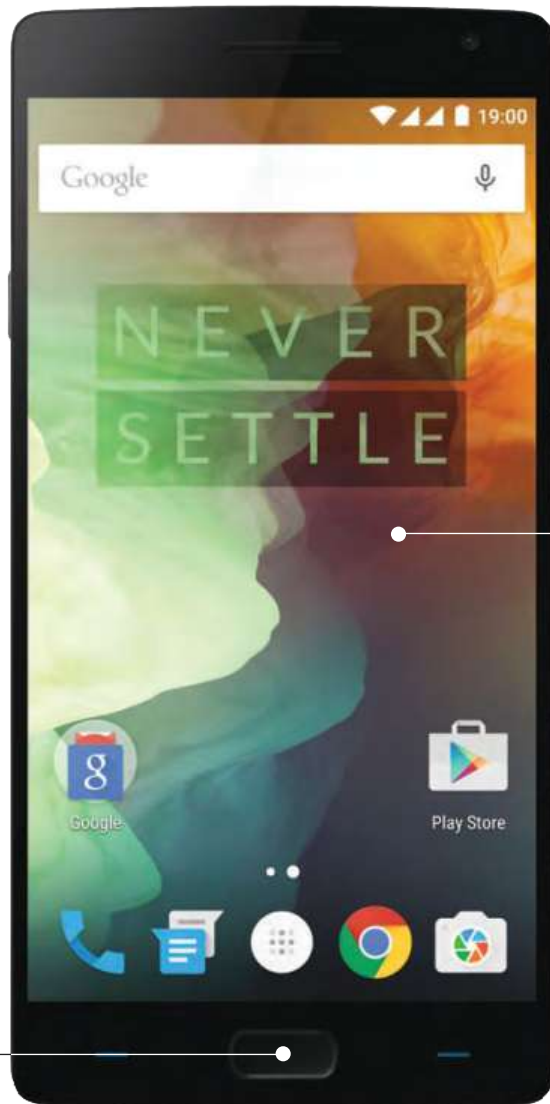
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OnePlus 2

OnePlus's new entry in the smartphone market is only the second in its short history but will it stand tall among giants?

Price: £289.99 Reviewer: Manny Pham



The OnePlus 2's display let's the phone speak for itself

Home button/
fingerprint panel

OnePlus is a new player in the game and with the release of the OnePlus 2 it has launched only its second attack on the ever expansive mobile phone market. Founded only in late 2013, OnePlus had impressed with its debut the OnePlus One, which we scored 9.0 as it impressed with class-leading specifications and its top-tier quality build.

OnePlus's aim is to be the Muji of the tech industry. CEO Pete Lau cited the Japanese company's simple yet wellmade products to be an inspiration. But he wants to do one better by delivering Muji quality at lower prices. OnePlus still operates with the same business model, in which it sells its phones that have been ordered directly by users for a small profit margin. Meaning you can't just go up the high street and get one the next day. Gigantic tease? Genius marketing? Or just damn right frustrating.

Compared with its recent effort, the OnePlus, the OnePlus 2 is bigger, bolder and better. Not to mention it's most appealing feature compared to its top tier rivals, it is significantly cheaper at £289.99.

DESIGN

The OnePlus 2 has that sophisticated look you'd want to look at every day. The home button/fingerprint panel is centred and almost parallel to the ear speaker, which complements the phone's sleek and debonair look. Yes that's right, you get debonair from a phone that's less than £300. Just like all the other high-tier phones the OnePlus 2 avoids slapping a fat logo on the front, letting the phone speak for itself with its amazing feel

SPEC SHEET

OS Lollipop v5.1

Processor Quad-core 1.56 GHz and 1.82, Snapdragon 810

Screen 5.5 inches

Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels (401 ppi pixel density)

Memory 4GB RAM

Storage 64 GB

MicroSD compatible? No

Rear camera 13 megapixels

Front camera 5 megapixels

Video 2160p@30fps, 720p@120fps

Connectivity 3G & 4G

Dimensions 151.8 x 74.9 x 9.9 mm

Weight 175 g

Battery Non-removable 3300 mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



4⁷/₅

Camera



4⁷/₅

Battery



4⁷/₅



The 13MP camera is impressive, even in low light while macro shots offer enough clarity to differentiate objects

and mesmerising display. Nestled nicely next to the front facing camera is the phone's notification light, which exists in the majority of Android phones, but what OnePlus has done is made it very small and discreet. Yet it's still sharp enough to grab your attention at the corner of your eye, as it slowly blinks on and off.

Running around the edge of the phone is a space grey metal finish, which shows off

OnePlus's attention to detail with its latest release. The bottom speakers are completely symmetrical and also line up with the headphone jack and noise-cancelling speaker, which gives it that high-end look you'd expect from a top-tier phone. Sadly it's not perfect as one of the bottom speakers is actually false and projects no sound whatsoever. The holes replicating speakers on the left side of the USB plug are there purely for aesthetics, the omission of a second speaker is obviously a cost saving measure.

The back of the phone is more for practicality and lifestyle than aesthetics but that does not mean it's a tale of two phones. The back case is unique with its sandstone black cover, giving a safe and gripped sandpaper feel while contributing to the phone's debonair look. The feeling of security in your hand is a relief due to the size of the phone. Although if you're not feeling the sandpaper feel you can order the phone with a variety of different cases.

CAMERA

We can't expect the OnePlus 2 to compete with the S6's overpowered camera, considering the price you won't really expect it to. Despite that the 13 megapixel camera produces some really detailed pictures. You'll have to zoom in pretty close before you start seeing pixelation in pictures. When taking macro shots the OnePlus 2 impressed with images that weren't exactly sharp but with enough clarity to differentiate objects in the picture. The benefits of the inclusion of laser auto focus and optical image stabiliser can be seen immediately, as taking pictures is fast with reduced camera shakes. What greatly

impressed me was the quality of pictures taken under low-light, which means of course the camera knocks it out of the park when taking pictures in good lighting, especially with the HDR on.

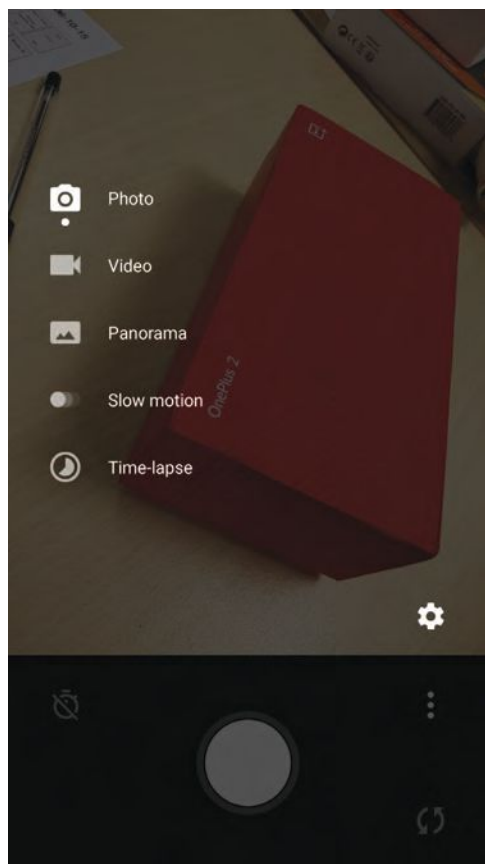
The downside of the camera is not the camera itself but the lack of manual options. You're presented with three options when tapping the menu icon; beauty, HDR and clear image. Delving deeper into the options (which wasn't that deep) you can bring up a grid to frame your shots and turn on the shutter sound. All very basic but so are the options on the iPhone 6. Which makes the camera very easy to use with no jargon too difficult to understand for casual photographers and social media addicts.

SCREEN

You'll be forgiven for thinking what's the difference between the OnePlus One and OnePlus 2. They both look almost exactly the same with a 5.5 inch screen and the same pixel per inch at 401. Which is also the same as the iPhone 6 Plus. With the above average ppi the clarity of the screen is definitely up there. OnePlus has boasted on how the screen performs well even in direct sunlight. A claim that we can say is not that accurate, but still viewable. Keeping with the subject of brightness, OnePlus internally tested the nits (measurement of brightness) level of its screen, and claims it is at a high 600 nits. Higher than the S6, iPhone 6 and HTC M9.

PERFORMANCE

The OnePlus 2 is an extremely fast phone and you'd expect it to be with the Snapdragon 810 running things for the



The camera is easy to use



There was no experience of lag or any disruption while playing Asphalt 8: Airborne

device. We ordered the higher model of the OnePlus 2, which packs 4GB of RAM, more than the Samsung S6 and the lower end OnePlus 2, both with 3GB. In our Geekbench test, the OnePlus 2 scored amazingly well. On the single core test it scored 1,202, putting it pretty much on par with the S6, which scored 1,210. On the multi-core front, it has surpassed all expectations as it scored a mighty 4,712, beating the Samsung Galaxy Edge (4398) by a considerable margin.

Asphalt 8: Airborne was our game of choice (surprise surprise) to push the OnePlus 2. During 30 minutes of gameplay there was no experience of lag or any disruption to the gameplay. The 4GB of RAM really helps as I switched from the game to a text message and back again, with great ease, all in a few strokes. Although the smartphone did heat up a little, not really surprising considering it has a Qualcomm's Snapdragon 810, which has a reputation for doing that (even though the latest version of Snapdragon 810 is meant to deal with this problem).

The lower end model has 16GB of internal memory, 3GB of RAM and costs £239. The high end version, which we have to review, has 64GB and 4GB of RAM, retailing at £289.99.

The difference in cost is almost £50, which is a small difference and makes the high end version the obvious choice mainly because the OnePlus 2 has no expandable microSD card slot. If you're a frequent photo snapper and sharer, the 16GB would not be ideal.

SOFTWARE

The user interface and navigation is fluid and comparable with any of the top end phones on the market. This is due to Android Lollipop 5.1.1 and to make things even sweeter, OnePlus 2 buyers will also be getting the next android software update Marshmallow 6.0.

What I found pretty useless however is the three sound modes you can switch between when playing music or watching Netflix. Music, movie, and game are the options. Although music and movie are more suitable for their respective genres, you will most likely use the game mode as it is the loudest.

NFC has been omitted because it wasn't a "popular feature" but that's soon to change. With Android Pay on the horizon, OnePlus could be potentially shooting itself in the foot.

BATTERY

The OnePlus gets so much right and one of



User interface and navigation is fluid

the very few faults it has includes the lack of a removable battery. But it seems that OnePlus has thought about this and decided to simply put in a bigger battery than everyone else in its phone so it can last an age. It has a 3300 mAh battery which only lost 14% of battery from 30 minutes of intensive gaming. Even from general use I found that I had about 40% left late in the evening from 100% in the morning.

Fast charging sadly does not feature here and charging the phone while using it really slows down the charging process. However, the OnePlus 2 does support USB Type-C making it so much easier for users to plug in their phone in the dark or early morning when you don't feel like opening your eyes just yet.

VERDICT

With only its second device ever, OnePlus has knocked it out of the park with the OnePlus 2. It has improved a lot on the OnePlus One with the seemingly endless battery life, souped-up specs and, of course, the incredible price. OnePlus has a phone that is so affordable for the specs on offer that it would be foolish to pass up on.

- + The battery lasts an age
- + Cheap price
- + Powerful specs
- Lack of fast charge and slow charging
- No microSD slot
- NFC omitted

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★



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Apple iPhone 6S

The 'S' version of the iPhone 6 has a few extra bells and whistles compared with its year-old predecessor. But are they enough to tempt current iPhone users to upgrade?

Price: £539.00 Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn



SPEC SHEET

OS iOS 9

Processor 1.84 GHZ Dual Core Apple A9

Screen 4.7-inches

Resolution 1334 x 750 pixels

Memory 2GB RAM

Storage 16/64/128GB

MicroSD compatible? No

Rear camera 12MP

Front camera 5MP

Video 4K at 30FPS

Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 138 x 67 x 7.1 mm

Weight 143g

Battery 1,712 mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



5₅

Camera



4₅

Battery



3₅



The new 12 megapixel iSight camera is similar to the iPhone 6 but edges ahead slightly on overall detail and contrast

Is it that time again already? Every September for the past few years, Apple has chosen to hold an event which focuses around the launch of a new iPhone device. This year, we reach version six of the provisional 's' line. Seen by many as a placeholder until the eventual launch of the next major iPhone milestone, the 's' handset has always been the less exciting launch of the two. This year, however, Apple actually has some quite significant upgrades going on under the hood of their new device. As the first smartphone to debut Force Touch (now renamed 3D Touch), it marks an important peak into the future of UI design for the company.

DESIGN

Those of you who are familiar with the Apple release scheduling system will already know that the 's' line is more of an internal upgrade rather than a physical one. As such, when we received the iPhone 6s it was business as usual.

The handset looks and feels exactly the same as the previous iPhone 6, which is no bad thing. Those who remember the 'Bendgate' disaster will also be happy to know that it is now made from a newer 7000 Series aluminium casing, which should hopefully be more resistant to the dreaded design flaw that plagued a few of the earlier devices. It feels incredibly comfortable in the hand with the curved edges providing a lovely grip.

The aluminium body is quite smooth, meaning you'll need to hold it tightly or risk having it slide out onto the floor. It's also prone to scratches, so those with keys should

beware of carrying both in the same pocket. Interestingly, Apple has forgone Gorilla Glass in the new model and opted for their own Ion X glass. This material was previously used on the Apple Watch and is supposedly stronger than what Corning are currently doing. It's ever-so-slightly thicker than last year's model and a bit heavier but it's incredibly hard to notice even when comparing them side-by-side. It's worth noting that despite the extra thickness, existing cases will fit the new iPhone 6s without any need for adjustment.

CAMERA

Apple spent a lot of the conference talking about how its camera tech has improved compared with the previous generation and while that's mostly true, the jump isn't quite as obvious as expected.

Make no mistake, the new 12 megapixel iSight camera is still a fantastic shooter but it doesn't offer much over the previous iPhone 6. Photos on both devices are very similar, with the iPhone 6s only edging ahead slightly on overall detail and contrast. For the average smartphone user, they likely won't notice any difference between the two in daylight pictures.

Night scenarios are a different matter altogether, with a huge jump in quality over the previous iteration. Objects were generally much more visible and detailed without any additional gain noise.

The lack of manual controls within the camera app is still an annoyance for me, though the auto function does a good job of compensating. It's also nice to see the inclusion of sapphire glass on the lens, which should help to protect it from

scuffs and scratches. 4K is a standout feature on the iPhone 6s, though oddly it's disabled by default. We can only assume that Apple has done this in an effort to help the regular conserve memory, as a typical 4K video will eat through the 16GB model in mere minutes. The omission of optical image stabilisation on the iPhone 6s (it's available on the larger 6s Plus) is a big disappointment and it makes videos noticeably jerky at times.

The excellent 5 megapixel front camera from last year has also been given a rather innovative improvement, using the screen as an actual flash. When in use, the screen will flash twice. The first is used to calibrate



3D Touch is potentially a UI game changer



A 'Siri Suggestions' page has been added

the perfect colour tone for the scene, while the second flash is a little brighter and actually illuminates the shot. It's an interesting idea, though it's not really applicable for dark scenes. The screen just can't get as bright as an LED flash and it seems more tailored for selfie use above anything else.

SCREEN

The iPhone 6 already had a fantastic screen and we're pretty sure that Apple has gone for the same panel in the iPhone 6s. Putting them side-by-side, there's little to discern last year's efforts from the new release. That means you're getting the same 4.7-inch screen with its unique 1334 x 750 resolution, which equates to 326 pixels-per-inch.

Compared with the Quad HD panels that now adorn most flagship Android devices, the resolution is starting to seem a bit measly on paper. The reality is that anything above 300ppi is good enough to avoid

pixilation and Apple has instead focused its efforts on other parts of the overall screen design.

In terms of colour reproduction, this is still one of the most accurate panels you can find on a smartphone. It's also one of the brightest screens available, making sunlight readability a major strength in its arsenal. Using the front screen as a flash is an interesting idea, though it did feel a little overbearing at times.

PERFORMANCE

Performance is one area where the iPhone 6s really excels versus last year's model. It uses the new 1.84 GHz A9 chipset, which performs well despite still only being a dual-core. The chip uses a smaller fabrication process to squeeze out more power, with Samsung and TSMC handling the manufacturing. Users have reported that the phone can get unusually hot in operation though we were not able to replicate the issue during testing. It's also had a RAM upgrade to 2GB, though Apple was understandably hush hush about this as the average Android device now ships with double that.

Overall benchmark scores were excellent on the iPhone 6s, showing a strong improvement. Single-Core speed is more than 30% faster than any other smartphone currently available, which is a testament to the engineering team. Even with only two physical processor cores, it manages to come out top on the multi-core tests, beating current king, the Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge.

SOFTWARE

Running the latest version of iOS 9, the experience is remarkably smooth and fluid. Once applications are cached and in memory, switching between them is near instantaneous. The new operating system adds a few new features such as a 'Siri Suggestions' page on the home screen, which can be accessed by swiping to the leftmost window. It acts like a

cross between Google Now and Cortana, proving recent contacts and apps while also displaying news content that it thinks is relevant to you. App switching has also undergone an improvement with larger page displays, while notifications are now sorted chronologically.

Of course, the big feature in the iPhone 6s is 3D touch and it works brilliantly, adding a whole new level of interactivity. Some of the functions are pretty well hidden, meaning a bit of experimentation is needed to actually discover them. You also need to apply a fair bit of pressure for it to register, rather than a cautious press like I was first attempting. Peak is possibly the most useful feature to be included and could totally change the way I browse the UI, allowing quick glances of emails, song info... Pretty much anything.

BATTERY

The battery on the new iPhone 6s is 1715 mAh which is roughly 100 mAh less than the previous iPhone 6. The surprising drop in juice reflects in the benchmark test, which is slightly lower. It scored a middling 5 hours 40 minutes, which is pretty average and no better than the previous generation. This area has never been a strong point of the iPhone series so it's not really a surprise. Those looking to take the handset on long trips will also need to invest in a powerbar since the battery is once again non-removable.

CONCLUSION

Apple is at a difficult point in its life. When you've been at the top for so long, people almost expect every product to innovate and break records. While the iPhone 6s definitely tries in those fields, not everything is perfect this time round. It's an amazing phone to be sure, but what interests me more is where it takes the technology in future iterations such as the iPhone 7. 3D Touch has the potential to be a game-changer and I'm eager to see what happens further down the line.

VERDICT

The iPhone 6s may not offer that much to warrant an immediate upgrade but it still has enough new features to welcome new adopters to the platform. Force Touch genuinely works well and has plenty of future potential, while the hardware and low-light camera improvements make this more than just a simple cash cow. Love 'em or hate 'em, the iPhone 6s is another big hit for Apple.

- + Excellent screen
- + Blistering performance
- + 3D touch more than a gimmick
- Screen flash feels gimmicky
- No battery life improvement
- No optical image stabilisation

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

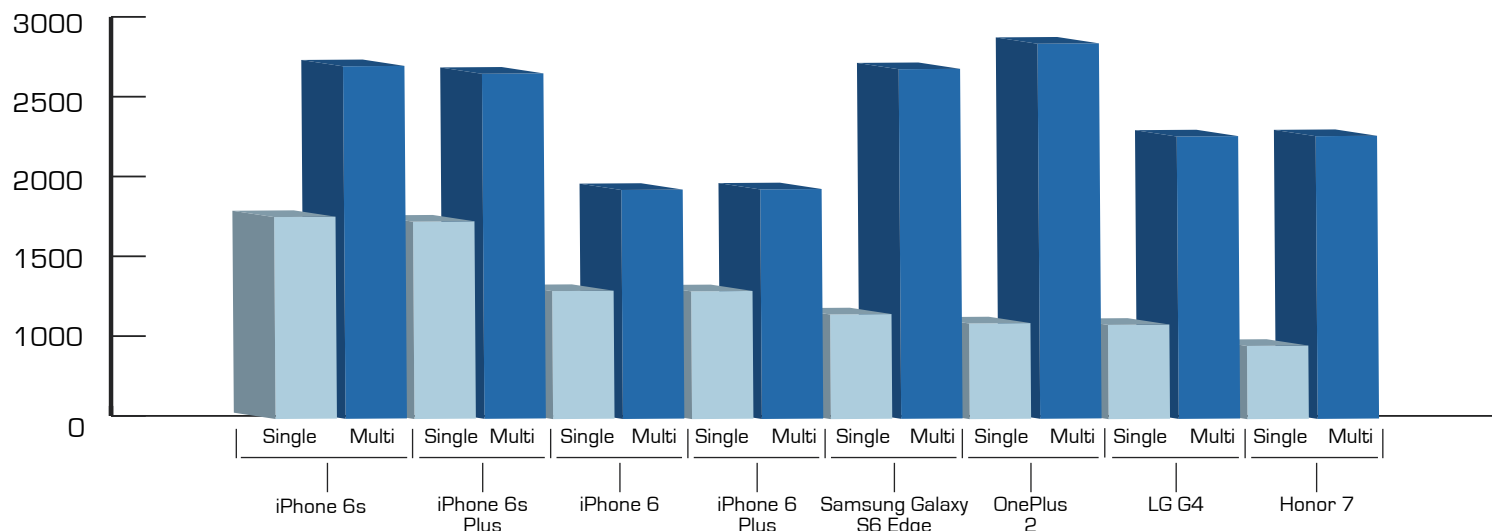
FEATURES

★★★★★

iPhone 6s/6s Plus In Pictures

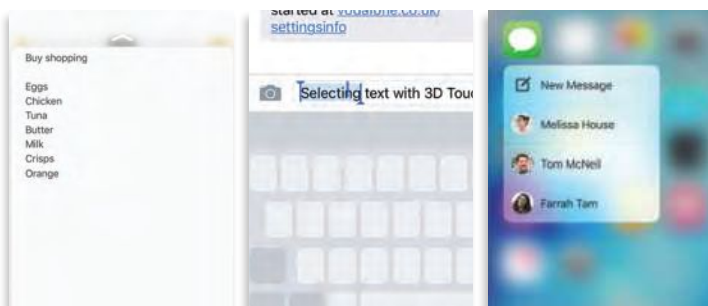
Single-Core & Multi-Core performance

Although the iPhone 6s isn't a monumental upgrade, there's still plenty of features worth talking about. We've put together this handy infographic page to help you decide which one to get and more importantly, if it's worth it.



3D TOUCH NEW FEATURES

Our top three picks of the best new 3D Touch features



'Peek' mode for quick viewing apps

Much faster text editing

Additional App options

iOS 9 NEW FEATURES

Our top three picks of the best new iOS 9 features



New App switcher interface

New Siri recommendations

Low Power Mode for better battery

HOW MUCH CAN I STORE ON EACH?

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64GB

128GB

	Standard quality MP3 (128kb/s): 5,714 songs High quality MP3 (256kb/s): 2,857 songs	Standard quality MP3 (128kb/s): 22,857 songs High quality MP3 (256kb/s): 11,428 songs	Standard quality MP3 (128kb/s): 45,714 songs High quality MP3 (256kb/s): 22,857 songs
	Front Camera (average size of 1.2MB): 13,333 photos Rear Camera (average size of 2.2MB): 7,272 photos	Front Camera (average size of 1.2MB): 53,333 photos Rear Camera (average size of 2.2MB): 29,090 photos	Front Camera (average size of 1.2MB): 106,666 photos Rear Camera (average size of 2.2MB): 58,181 photos
	4K video (50mb/s): 42 min 1080p 60FPS video (27mb/s): 79 min 720p 30FPS video (8mb/s): 266 min	4K video (50mb/s): 170 min 1080p 60FPS video (27mb/s): 316 min 720p 30FPS video (8mb/s): 1066 min	4K video (50mb/s): 341 min 1080p 60FPS video (27mb/s): 632 min 720p 30FPS video (8mb/s): 2133 min

Wileyfox Swift

A wily new budget phone makes its debut – and deserves your immediate attention.

Price: £129.00 Reviewer: Philip Brown

It's strange to say but the biggest innovations in smartphones in the past year or two haven't been at the top end. Sure, Samsung's new Edge phones have wraparound screens and the iPhone 6s has 3D Touch. But the most exciting breakthrough has been the technologies companies are managing to squeeze into budget phones while still apparently breaking even. There's the self-proclaimed, sub £300 'flagship killer' OnePlus 2, as well as Motorola's Moto handsets, serving up HD displays, 4G connections and the latest builds of Google's Android OS for next to nothing. It's into this fray that we have an unlikely new entrant, the Swift, from a new British company, Wileyfox. It's a mere £129 off-contract, but it's backed up by impressive specs and an unusual Android build, hacker haven Cyanogen. A glimpse of the specs sheet had us asking 'What's the catch?', but so far we've not really found one.

DESIGN & BUILD

The design of the Swift is one of two halves, the front face and the back. The phone is relatively thin at 9.37mm (a tad leaner than the Motorola Moto G), but the construction is solid, with absolutely no give – impressive when you consider that the back panel comes off to let you get at the replaceable battery and microSD slot.

You wouldn't guess this to look at its front panel, a thoroughly orthodox black surface that hoards fingerprints. The screen is surrounded by a large bezel on all sides, and more obviously a somewhat unseemly lip where the sides join. You'll quickly end up



SPEC SHEET

OS Android (Cyanogen 12.1)
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5.0 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes

Camera 13MP rear-facing
Video 1080p at 30fps
Connectivity Dual-SIM, 4G
Dimensions 141.15mm x 71mm x 9.37mm
Weight 135g
Battery 2,500 mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



4¹/₅

Camera

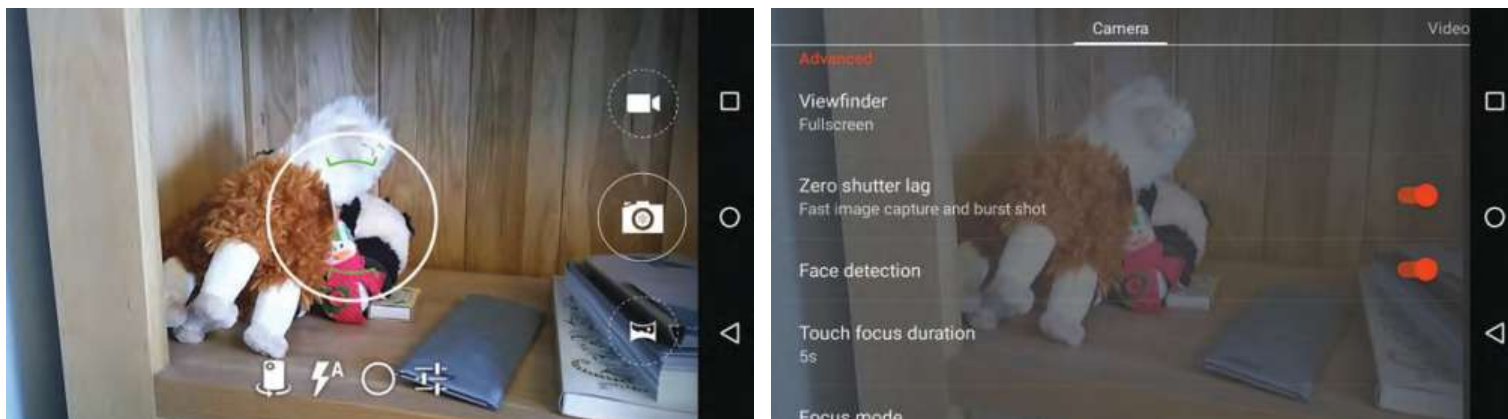


4¹/₅

Battery



4¹/₅



The 13MP rear camera is every bit as good as mid-priced rivals, while the camera app is feature packed but somewhat ungainly to use

with lint all along this narrow channel unless you use a case. If you were to look at this phone in a shop, you'd struggle to spot the difference from most other network-branded cheapo phones. Turn the phone over, though, and it's a different story.



The handset is backed up by Cyanogen 12.1

The Wileyfox Swift sports a matte plastic back cover with its logo embossed in the middle and typeface in a quiet orange beneath it. It's nowhere near as garish as it sounds and, more importantly, is very comfortable to hold and use. Prise it off and you'll find something even more surprising: dual SIM card slots so you can have two phone numbers tied to the device. It's a niche feature and as a result a rare thing in a UK handset, but for those who want one phone for work and personal lines, it's an awesome one and a real USP. Otherwise there are few surprises with the hardware: the volume and power buttons on the right hand side, while the 3.5mm jack sits on top and the micro USB port underneath.

DISPLAY

Most budget phones – OnePlus excepted – see some sort of compromise on the touchscreen display. The 5-inch screen on the Swift is spacious and responsive, but the 720p resolution is not all that sharp; you'll notice the grain in fonts coming from a 1080p smartphone. Colour reproduction is not especially accurate either, certainly not compared to the warm Moto G display.

The Swift does make up for this on other ways, however. For one, it's extremely bright – to the point we're surprised the handset doesn't run hot. That means visibility outdoors is never an issue. Dig into the settings and you can not only adjust the

colour temperature, you can actually set it to different levels depending on the time of day. Hardcore Android aficionados will love this.

PERFORMANCE

Quite how many will trade their Nexus in for a Swift though is unclear, as it's also an inevitable downgrade in the specs. Not by too much, mind – the 64-bit Swift is powered by a quad-core Snapdragon 410 processor and packs in a generous 2GB of RAM. It's fast enough for web browsing and YouTube videos, even a light bit of Crossy Road.

That said, the CPU is clocked at 1.2GHz rather than the Moto G's 1.4GHz, and the difference is noticeable. That may be more to do with Motorola's obsessive software optimisation, but apps spring open slightly more quickly on the G than on the Swift. Not that you'll mind too much: both phones manage every tasks with aplomb but falter under 3D games.

The rear 13 megapixel camera is every bit the Moto G's match: in fact, for image quality in decent light it's every bit as good as mid-range mobiles like the selfie-obsessed HTC Desire Eye. We even produced decent indoor shots. Its one downfall is the ugly Cyanogen camera app, which is feature packed but ungainly to use and actively unhelpful when it comes to framing shots in different aspect ratios. Still, with a bit of patience, you can extract respectable shots from it.

VERDICT

A good budget handset that struggles to stand out from the crowd, the Wileyfox Swift faces stiff competition from the likes of Motorola. Punch-for-punch, it has fettaures to match similar handsets but the difficulty of being an entirely new brand will make it hard to claw loyal fans away from other devices.

- + Fantastically clear display
- + Gorgeous design
- + Decent battery life

- Photos can be dark and grainy
- Struggles to run high-demand apps
- A little pricey for its specs

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

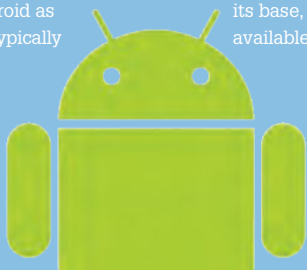
CYANOGEN

THE SECRET ANDROID BUILD YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

As Google was once keen to stress, its Android operating system is open source. You can download the source code and completely alter it – it's for this reason a Samsung Android phone looks different to a HTC. Each wants to put their own 'skin' or experience atop Android.

That can be confusing, but it's also liberating. It's not just manufacturers that can alter Android: so can users. One of the most popular community-generated Android builds is CyanogenMod. Named after creator Steve Kondik (AKA 'Cyanogen'), it's a firmware that takes Android as its base, but focuses on providing many more options not typically available to users, including power and CPU settings.

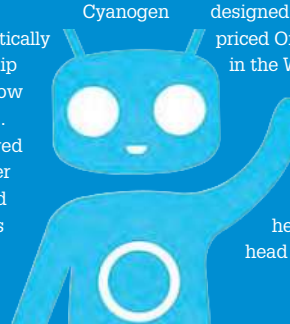
Because CyanogenMod as old as Android by volunteers and release cycle, it is major new devices as



– which is almost itself – is overseen updated on a rolling often quickly ported to they launch. Cyanogen

is not homebrew, however – not any more. With financial backing from companies including Twitter and mobile titan Qualcomm, it's a big business, with rapidly improving design to match its customisability. The smartphone market is becoming ever more competitive, and even some manufacturers are spotting an opportunity.

Oppo partnered with Cyanogen Inc to release a version of its N1 flagship running Cyanogen OS, a build of Cyanogen designed specifically for OEMs, and then in 2014 the fantastically priced OnePlus One was one of the first major phones to ship out of the box. Huawei is now with support for its devices. And the brand this issue – runs new Wileyfox Swift reviewed with the phone's degree for an otherwise here to stay – if you want head to cyanogenmod.org to see if it is supported.



ANDROID



CYANOGEN

LAYOUT

A vanilla Android Nexus device homescreen



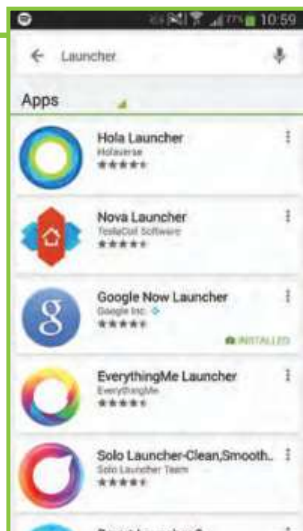
A Cyanogen homescreen



At a glance the two platforms look extremely similar. In truth, they are. You can change the 'launchers' (think homescreen layout and design) of both very easily. But Cyanogen lets you get much, much deeper.

MODIFICATION

On most Android phones you'll need to head to the Play store to download a customisable launcher to change the themes

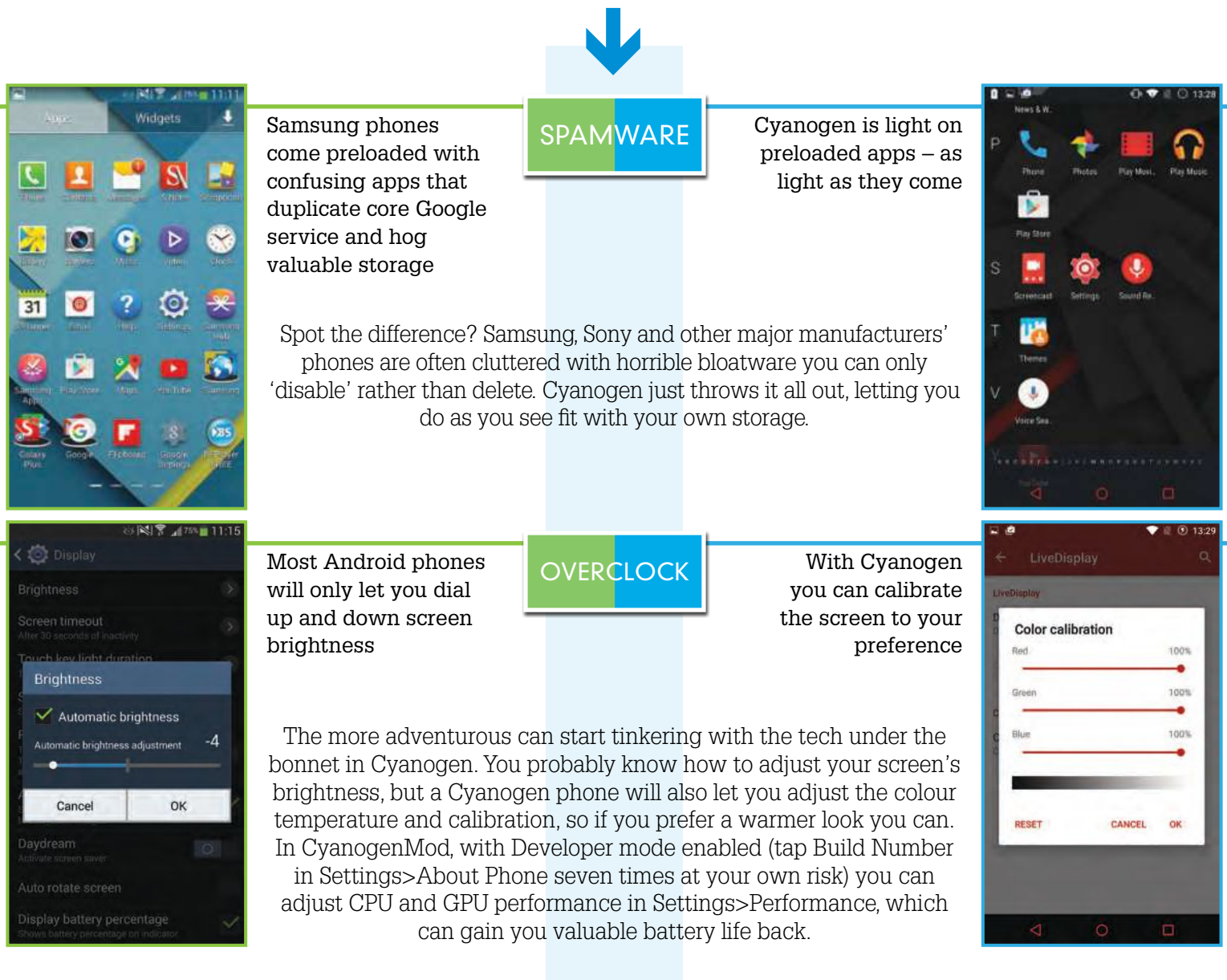


The Themes app on Cyanogen makes this possible straight from the homescreen



Cyanogen's Themes app makes it beyond easy to apply new looks to your homescreen. You simply pick new ones and tap to apply (some are paid, some are free). You can even tailor individual elements, from how the status bar looks to the font, even what animation you see when you boot the phone up.





THE CASE FOR CYANOGEN

Better battery life

CyanogenMod – but not the proprietary Cyanogen OS baked into some phones – lets you overclock your phone's processor to get more performance out of it. However, it also lets you cap clock speed, noticeably extending battery life – great news if you'd rather have a phone that runs for two days on a charge than one that tanks in a morning but can edit 4K video.

More apps for Amazon

There are several CyanogenMod builds for the Android-based Kindle Fire devices. This is particularly handy since Amazon sells its hardware at very low prices, but removes all the recognisable elements of Android, including the vastly superior Play app store. Installing CyanogenMod lets you add them right back in.

It gives old devices a new lease of life

Manufacturers eventually stop pushing out major upgrades to their old phones, so while in theory your Google Nexus S or Samsung Galaxy S II has reached end of life, CyanogenMod can help it almost up to date with the news phones – at least for features, if not performance.

THE CASE AGAINST CYANOGEN

You are on your own

Lots of phones can run CyanogenMod, but only a few ship with CyanogenOS preloaded. It's relatively easy to install for the most part, but check your manual – it will almost certainly void your warranty, so if a fault develops you'll be left footing the bill. There's a vibrant community around Cyanogen, however, who are happy to help troubleshoot, so all is not lost. But instructions are too lengthy (and varied) to explain here, so make sure you're prepared by schooling up on terms like 'root', 'flashing' and 'recovery'. Don't even think about attempting it until you understand the concept first.

Not all devices support it

There are countless Android devices on the market right now, each with different chipsets, screens and radios. As such, CyanogenMod has to be tailored to work for each device. The list of handsets and tablets supported by volunteers is extensive, but by no means total, and your mileage will vary – cheap budget handsets from phone networks in particular often get no Cyanogen love and attention.

Vector Luna smartwatch

A smartwatch with unrivalled design and battery life but an entirely absent eco-system.

Price: £219.00 Reviewer: Philip Brown

It's high time somebody disrupted the narrative of the Silicon Valley disruptor. Still a nascent product category, smartwatches have so far been dominated by internet giants, laptop manufacturers and venture-backed Kickstarter darlings; meanwhile, all those staid watch companies from Casio to Rolex haven't had a look in.

Frankly, it's getting a little tedious, so it's refreshing to see a company like Vector come along and put the hackers back in their place. It's staffed with veterans from watch companies including Timex and Fossil, and its first product, the Luna smartwatch, stole the show at the Baselworld watch convention earlier this year, thanks to its classic design and an emphasis on something Google, Apple, Sony et al seem to have completely forgotten about: battery life. On paper, the £219 Luna should royally trounce these Young Turks. In practice, you soon find yourself wondering if some of those sunkissed California programmers slurping on soylent slushies and killing it wouldn't mind throwing some of their knowledge Vector's way nonetheless, because everything really does need apps.

DESIGN & BUILD

As you might expect from companies better used to making web browsers or TV screens, the design of most smartwatches we've seen so far has been perfunctory at best. Even the pricey Apple Watch looks like a Casio calculator watch with no clothes on. Not the Luna though; this is a watch first and foremost, one blessed with a natural intelligence, not a Bluetooth enabled device with a leather strap bolted on as an afterthought.

SPEC SHEET

OS Custom
Storage No
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera No
Video No
Connectivity Bluetooth LE
Dimensions 44 x 44 x 11mm
Weight 142g
Battery 30 days

We tested the metal, circular edition of the Luna (a more subtle square model is on the way), and quite honestly it's in a class of its own. It's chunky, like an LG G Watch R, but with none of the childish Baby-G stylings. A classy strap connects up to a 11mm thick smooth circular disc which curves up to a completely circular display, albeit inset by a thick black bezel. It's very simple, and elegant as a result, something no other smartwatch manufacturer has managed yet. It makes the Pebble Time, its foremost rival since it too works with Android and iOS, look like a toy from a cereal packet.

That said, unlike the Time, the Luna lacks a colour screen. Instead, it sports a low-res black and white display to show you the time and notifications; it's perfectly visible even in broad sunlight – notifications appear as a thick white line around the clock face and you can either tilt to look at the them or press the central button on



the side. Importantly, the display is not a touchscreen: you simply control notifications and watch faces from the buttons on the side. This also has the benefit of preserving battery life, which is useful when the monochrome screen is always on, you know, like a real watch rather than most smartwatches, which require a comical flick of the wrist to activate.

Let's talk about that battery life, since it's the Luna's true USP despite the handsome exterior. The Luna absolutely lives up to Vector's claims of one month battery life, even with the display on 24 hours and notifications constantly pouring in. (It's worth noting that you can only view battery life through the app

AT A GLANCE

Speed



5₅

Camera



4₅

Battery



4₅

on your phone; in practice this isn't an issue since you only have to remember to charge it up on your nightstand once every three weeks or so using the charger that bolts onto the back of the face.) If you're after a smartwatch but worried about how much charge it'll hold after a year of use (something we're yet to learn about the Apple Watch), then this should bump the Luna right up to the top of your shopping list.

SOFTWARE

To emphasise its unique position, Vector has built its own custom operating system for the Luna, which is in some ways inspired, and in others utterly lacking. It's fast and reliable, but crucially the Luna is not for interacting with your phone from your wrist – there's no music track controls yet, and you can't even answer a call from it, only send it to answerphone.

Instead, the Luna is about showing you what's upcoming. After quickly pairing via Bluetooth, you can see on 'analog' watch faces what hours you have events in your calendar that day, as well as who emails and messages are from (once you clear these away with a button press, they're gone from your watch for good).

You can pick your watch face from the perfunctory smartphone app, which shows things like steps versus your goals, distance covered (which seems fairly accurate, though the sleep quality gauge is utterly meaningless) and lets you set multiple alarms, with the promise of more designs to come. You can choose digital watch faces too, but you'll want to pick one which has space for the Luna's best software feature: streams. These are simply lines of data, but they're always up to date and always on show, so you can see different world time zones of your choosing, your live step count or even stock prices. These are actually incredibly subtle, personal and convenient, and an innovation we hope others steal – there are actually very, very few devices that show your live step count at all times, with no button press required.

Notifications on the other hand are a

complex beast. Actually, on the Luna they're just a bit of a mess. A quiet vibration alerts you to anything incoming, but because they're simply pulled from whatever your smartphone spits out, they vary wildly. On Android, for instance, Google Talk messages appear with the first lines of a message (handy), but emails often appear with only the sender's name, and not even a subject line. The same is true for WhatsApp conversations. When that happens, you find yourself just opening your phone anyway.

There's no simple way to tailor notifications on what emails make it through to your wrist either – you'll have to play around with your email app of choice to see what works. This does at least mean you can customise to your heart's content – there's a lot you can do if you know your way around apps like If This Then That or Tasker – but for smartwatch novices, it'll be a daunting, uphill process.

In fact, that's the Luna's biggest drawback, not the design, not even the price: the question mark hovering over it is third party support in future. This is uncharted territory for Vector, and it's still finding its way, figuring out which Android, Apple and Windows Phone apps push what to wearables (the company has yet to find a reliable way to push Google Maps directions, for instance). It's barely even started on getting third party developers involved: there are a few 'apps' which are just news tickers from sites like BBC News and Cnet, but they're all from Vector itself.

There's no existing eco-system, which presents a real risk to potential purchasers, when Pebble has managed to get so many developers and services on board with its platform. You need to be willing to gamble with the Luna: you could be getting the ultimate smartwatch, but it also might never become more than what it is now, an early warning system for all of your emails.

One thing we're as sure of though, so certain you could set your watch by it: a Vector watch with Pebble's app support would be a force to reckon with Apple and Google.

Multi-talented rivals

While Android Wear tickers and the Apple Watch are restricted to working with their smartphone siblings, there are several smartwatches that work on both platforms – some even on Windows Phone too. Here are some of the other jacks of all trades worth a watch.

PEBBLE TIME (£179)

A Kickstarter darling, the Pebble Time is the only smartwatch out there with a colour screen and a seven day battery life. It works with Android and iPhone, but its main selling point is a huge eco-system of developers on board already. The drawback? It has the design aesthetic of a 1980s digital watch.

ALCATEL ONETOUCH (£99)

A bargain on paper, the OneTouch's analog stylings are certainly preferable to a Pebble, but the company's own custom OS is limited, much like the Vector's. You can't react to notifications or receive directions via the screen. Best for fitness fans who can enjoy the heart rate monitor and music track controls while keeping a distant eye on work emails..

FITBIT SURGE (FROM £160)

More a fitness watch meant to be worn all day than a true smartwatch, the Surge can still handle many of the same duties: it lets you change tunes on your Android or iPhone's music players and shows call and text notifications. GPS tracking means it's much more accurate for tracking your runs and hikes.

VERDICT

An ambitious attempt to inject some much-needed class into the smartwatch. It's beautiful. But the level of interactivity is minimal and its software lacking. Ultimately, we came away wondering what a Pebble Time with Vector's hardware and battery life might be like. We can only hope this becomes just that, but the company has a long road to travel first.

- + Beautiful design
- + Excellent battery life
- + Screen always on

- Complex notification system
- Lacks Pebble developer support
- Most information sent only one way

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

Motorola Moto G (3rd Gen)

With weighty expectations on its shoulders, Motorola's hugely successful budget handset reaches its third iteration. Will it continue to reign supreme?

Price: £159.00 Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn

If you cast your eyes back to the Motorola Mobility event in July, the company announced a flurry of new devices. The Moto G represents the budget end of the spectrum, costing just £150 from most online retailers. As the third iteration in a successful legacy, it has some big expectations on its shoulders. Thankfully, the company has continually improved the device and it remains competitive.

DESIGN

If you've seen the second generation Moto G, you'd be forgiven for thinking it was the same device if viewed from the front. It has the same black or white monolithic appearance, with the polycarbonate material doing little to truly make it stand out. Moto Maker makes a triumphant return, allowing complete customisation of the materials. Oddly, the stereo speakers that were included in the second gen version are now gone. Only one of the two giant front grilles now operates as a speaker, with the other mainly being there for show. I'm not quite sure why Motorola has chosen to remove this, as it was a nice feature on the previous Moto G. Still, the added bonus of full waterproofing is a welcome feature that makes up for this.

On the rear, there's a couple of subtle welcome changes. The grippy matte finish on the original Moto G is gone and has now been replaced by a textured rubber which feels even more secure in the hand. This is definitely one of the most snug devices I have ever held and it fills me with plenty of reassurance that it won't slip out of the hand like butter. There's also a new piece of contrasting plastic trim which

surrounds the sensor, with the familiar Motorola logo proudly embossed into it just underneath. The single LED flash has now been replaced with a dual LED variant, which should help to illuminate those low-light shots a little better. It also has an excellent weight to it with near-perfect distribution across the device.

On the right hand side you'll find the volume and power keys, which again have a very similar feel to the ones on the previous Moto G. Sturdy and with minimal travel, they should be able to stand up to a fair amount of abuse. The rear case is removable, revealing a sim tray and microSD slot only. The battery lies inside the device and cannot be replaced, which is a real shame considering this was one of the main annoyances surrounding the second gen version.

CAMERA

The Moto G has what could be the best rear camera at this price-point. With a 13 megapixel sensor, it already beats most other comparative devices on the market, though it's the image quality that really sets this thing apart. Colour reproduction is outstanding with a real sense of vibrancy to each image. Shots are also well exposed in bright conditions and the software does a good job of adjusting to its surroundings. Low-light shots are also impressive, though the insistence on using the built-in flash can produce harsh images in certain conditions.

For such a great camera, we were disappointed to find a lack of manual controls. We understand this is marketed at the type of users who may not necessarily



SPEC SHEET

OS Android Lollipop v5.1.1
Processor 1.4 GHZ Snapdragon 410
Screen 5.0-inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1 GB RAM (8GB), 2 GB RAM (16GB)
Storage 8 GB/16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB

Rear camera 13MP
Front camera 5MP
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 142 x 72 x 11.6 mm
Weight 155g
Battery 2,470mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



4₅

Camera



5₅

Battery



4₅



The camera beats most other comparative devices on the market but lacks manual controls

need such tools but it would've been nice to see more than just two basic controls. This is a quality sensor that cries out for deeper controls and we urge you to take advantage of the new Lollipop camera API and download a dedicated third-party application like Camera FV-5. Besides the rear camera, the new Moto G is also equipped with an equally good front camera. The 5 megapixel front sensor does a good job of taking selfies with little noise in all but the darkest of conditions. Detail is well retained with little in the way of artefacts or crosstalk.

SCREEN

The Moto G third generation carries a 5-inch IPS panel with a resolution of 1280 x 720. This equates to roughly 294 pixels per inch, which is just shy of the minimum print standard. Pixilation is never really evident even when viewed at close distances and colours are well represented with plenty of vibrancy. Viewing angles are excellent, with the screen perfectly viewable with no distortion even at the most extreme angles. Maximum brightness is acceptable, with enough illumination to make it viewable under reasonably bright conditions. Those under direct sunlight are likely to struggle, however.

VERDICT

Motorola has done it again with another excellent device that punches above its weight and mostly improves on its predecessor. It's a gloriously consistent device that doesn't necessarily excel but offers perfectly fine performance across the board. Every area is catered for here, offering impressive battery life, a brilliant camera and adequate performance. If you're looking for a solid Android device that won't break the bank, the Moto G is worth some serious consideration.

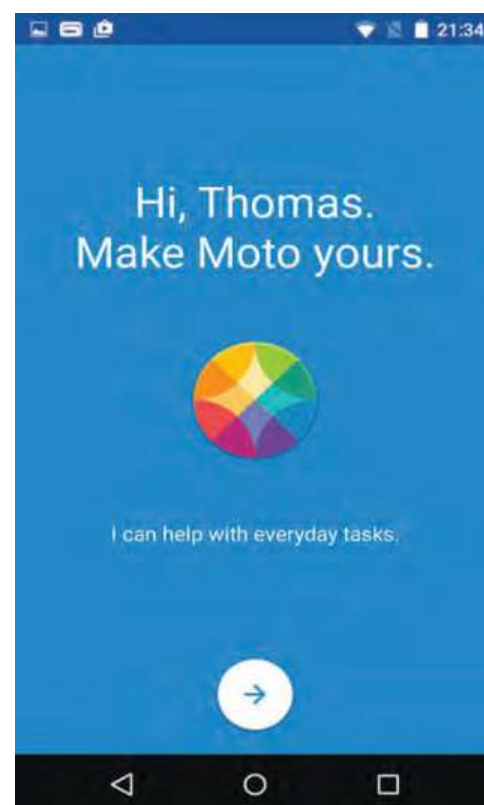
PERFORMANCE

Like almost every smartphone at this price, the new Motorola Moto G uses a Qualcomm Snapdragon 410. This is a jump up from the previous generation, which used a Snapdragon 400. An overall PassMark score of 2976 sits in the higher tier of devices powered by said chip, despite only having 1GB RAM. The included 8GB of internal memory in our review model was tiny, with the Android OS using roughly a fifth of the overall space. Memory cards cost nothing these days so it's hardly a huge issue.

Playing Asphalt 8: Airborne was a surprisingly smooth experience considering the low-end Snapdragon, with high settings only introducing a subtle frame-rate drop. While it wasn't buttery smooth, it was most definitely playable. It was only on the more visually intensive levels where things got slower and this was hardly game-breaking.

SOFTWARE

Running a near-stock version of Android 5.1.1, the user experience on the new Moto G is both smooth and fluid. Motorola has carried across the Moto app which first debuted in the Moto X. It includes most of the features found in the original and they've been tweaked to work better. The 'Places' feature is fantastic and adjusts notification



The Moto G can be personalised

sounds according to your location. 'Actions' allows gesture control of the device through various motions, such as making a chopping motion to turn the flashlight on. The final feature is 'Display', which operates as a glance function for notifications. The amount of detail shown on the lock screen can be completely customised.

BATTERY

The battery on the new Moto G is 2,470 mAh, which is above average for this price-point. Our battery drain benchmarking test measured a respectable 7 hours 31 minutes under constant use, which is a good result. In real world scenarios, I was easily able to make it through a day of moderate use before I had to reach for the charger. The phone doesn't have a removable battery, which means you'll need to lug around a powerbar if you want to go on any overnight trips.

- + Excellent camera
- + Good performance
- + Impressive battery life
- Removal of front speaker
- Non-removable battery
- Not the brightest screen

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

Acer Liquid Z220

Acer's new smartphone is one of the cheapest on the market but will it stand up to expectations?

Price: £50.00 Reviewer: Manny Pham



caters to the lower end of the mobile market and has solidified that reputation further with the Z220.

DESIGN

The Z220 sadly looks like a budget phone from the front, the main reason being the dead space around the screen. The space at the bottom of the phone houses nothing but the noise-cancelling microphone. All of the touch interface is done on the screen when it could have been utilised in the dead space. The matte black does a decent job in giving the phone a sophisticated feel and the faux leather design on the plastic back case enhances that, which makes it a crying shame that the design isn't consistent throughout the phone. The back case continues to impress with a fingerprints test, which it passed with flying colours. A ribbed silver band runs around the edge of the phone giving it a unique feel. It feels secure in your hand as the ribbed edges provides friction and making it less likely you'll drop it.

CAMERA

The camera boasts a meek 5 megapixels, which produces quite low quality pictures. You will definitely not be using the Z220 as your primary camera for weekends away. The camera also features autofocus, which is a lovely surprise considering it's a budget phone. The autofocus takes a while to focus but considering the price it is a great positive. The camera continues to surprise with auto-exposure, which does a good job in adjusting to the right levels for your pictures, albeit with a longer delay than desired. The front-facing camera is 2 megapixels, which means selfies

Acer has made a daring leap to the top of the budget phone market by going to the bottom with the release of the Acer Liquid Z220, its cheapest Android phone to date. But what makes this particular budget phone special is

that it's the first Acer phone to ship running Google's Lollipop 5.0 operating system. Acer is well associated with personal computers, boasting it is the fourth largest personal computer vendor in the world in 2014. In the world of mobile phones, however, Acer

SPEC SHEET

OS Android Lollipop v5.0
Processor 1.2 GHZ Qualcomm MSM8210 Dual-core
Screen 4.0-inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 1 GB RAM (8GB), 2 GB RAM (16GB)
Storage 8 GB

MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 32GB
Rear camera 5MP
Front camera 2MP
Video 720p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 125.3 x 64 x 9.6 mm
Weight 120g
Battery 1300mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



2₅

Camera



3₅

Battery



2₅



The 5MP rear camera produces quite low quality pictures

are almost out of the question. Pictures with the self-facing camera tend to always carry noise and are almost never clear.

SCREEN

The window to the soul of any smartphone should always be impressive and sadly the Acer Z220's 4-inch display does not. With a resolution of 480 x 800 pixels, which equates to a pixel density of 233ppi, the screen is well below the average density of roughly 294 per inch. The biggest problem with the screen is the woeful viewing angles. During our performance review, in which we used Asphalt 8: Airborne to push the phone, we found the game impossible to play. When making a turn at a sharp corner or scoring a record-breaking drift, you'll have to do the last third blind as it is almost impossible to see what you're doing due to the poor quality of the screen. Basically all games that require motion should be ruled out for the Z220.

Another major downfall for the screen is how unresponsive it can be. At times we found ourselves having to double tap the screen to simply launch an app. Texting proved to be a challenge as the 4-inch display works against big hands. Combine that with an at times unresponsive screen results in grafting for a simple text message.

PERFORMANCE

Inside the Acer Z220 is a 1.2 GHZ Qualcomm Snapdragon 200 processor, the oldest Snapdragon processor by Qualcomm, which is expected inside a budget phone. The processor does the job in keeping the phone running as you jump between apps. Running only with 1GB of RAM, the Z220 performs well while running apps, but be warned, the more apps you open the more you'll see the limits of the phone. Crossing from Asphalt 8: Airborne to the call app, we discovered significant lag in the crossover.

The usual benchmarking game of Asphalt 8: Airborne performed surprisingly well on the Z220. While playing it for 30 minutes we experienced no lag or any form of stuttering during the performance test. But the Z220 did suffer from long loading times, hardly what you want when you want to quickly get something going for the short but arduous journey home.

The good news is that the Z220 has expandable memory, allowing you to use micro SD cards up to 32GB. Which means more space for music! But it is really recommended to buy external earphones as the ones bundled in the box are inept at drowning out the sounds of the city, not offering that escape that we crave from time to time.



Autofocus is a nice touch

SOFTWARE

Lollipop version 5.0 comes ready with the Z220, which makes it stand out as a budget phone. Aside from animations, effects and icon size, Lollipop is bolder and simpler. Which makes the phone feel modern. Lollipop 5.0 equips the device with many great features such as Google's card-based multi-tasking system and improved notifications, making it even easier to navigate the user interface.

BATTERY

Battery life is poor, to say the least, with 30 minutes of continuous gaming draining 18% of the battery life. Definitely not a phone you can get a day's use out of. The Z220 does have a removable battery, which is located on the back of the phone once you remove the svelte back case. It is highly recommended to carry a second fully charged battery to ensure that you're not stranded without a phone. As in today's day and age, to be caught without your trusty smartphone renders you dead in the water.

VERDICT

The Acer Z220 is a solid phone and that's all it really is. It performs solidly as a communications device but anything extra-curricular is asking too much. Should you decide to purchase one, there are too many add-ons you have to purchase externally to make it a worthwhile purchase. Which defeats the purpose of a budget phone. But if you're looking for a budget phone that can connect to the internet, make calls and text, this could be for you.

- + Nice design
- + Lollipop 5.0
- + Great price

- Battery life is dismal
- Screen lacks quality
- Terrible interface

OVERALL ★★☆☆☆

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

Huawei Honor 7

Huawei is at it again with a new follow-up addition to its premium Honor range. Can this midrange handset compete with the best flagship models?

Price: £250.00 **Reviewer:** Thomas Wellburn



SPEC SHEET

OS Android Lollipop v5.0
Processor Kirin 935 (8 cores: 2.2 GHz quad core + 1.5 GHz quad-core)
Screen 5.2-inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 3GB
Storage 16GB/ 64GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB

Rear camera 20MP
Front camera 8MP
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 143 x 72 x 8.5 mm
Weight 157g
Battery 3,100mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



3¹/₅

Camera



4¹/₅

Battery



3¹/₅



'Light painting' mode uses a long shutter speed to create spectacular light trails

Huawei sub-brand Honor has continued to make a name for itself thanks to competitively priced handsets that perform very close to the best flagships money can buy. The previous Honor 6 was a big hit, with impressive performance and a cheap price tag. The newer Honor 7 aims to carry on the success with an updated design and improved hardware. Will it succeed?

DESIGN

The Honor 7 is an attractive device that tries and mostly succeeds to compete with those at a much higher price-point. With a brushed aluminium finish that encompasses the rear of the handset, it certainly has a premium appeal. Honor has taken the best bits from numerous devices and thrown them together in an inspired design. There's a hint of iPhone and a dab of HTC, finished off with a sprinkle of Samsung. Unfortunately, the two bits of plastic at the top and bottom somewhat detract from the overall experience.

On the rear, you'll find the fingerprint and camera sensors, plus a dual-LED flash for better illumination in low-light. The camera lens itself benefits from having tough sapphire glass on the outside, meaning there should be less chance of causing any deep scratches. On the sides you'll find a volume rocker and power button, plus a special smart key which we'll get to later. There's also a dual SIM slot where the second SIM holder doubles up as a micro SD slot.

CAMERA

Featuring a 20 megapixel rear camera, the Honor 7 is way ahead of the competition on

paper, though as we know, megapixels don't necessarily mean everything. In practice I was pretty impressed with it but not blown away. The images show a great deal of detail and very little noise but I couldn't help feeling that they seemed somewhat dull. Colours are very natural but I do miss the vibrancy from other devices such as the new Moto G (also reviewed in this issue).

There's no shortage of features on-board, including the obligatory 'beauty mode' which tends to ship on most Asian devices. Adjusting the slider will give you virtual airbrushing effect which ranges from subtle to doll-like perfection. There's also a very cool 'light painting' mode, which uses a long shutter speed to create some spectacular looking light trails. It's a bit difficult to use without a tripod but I still managed to get some impressive results by hand.

One irritating thing regarding the camera application is how the juicy settings are buried deep within the user interface. To

alter exposure, ISO and the like, I had to dive into a settings sub-menu and scroll down to image adjustments. This seemed incredibly counter-intuitive and one has to wonder why they didn't just put a quick-link directly onto the camera window.

SCREEN

The Honor 7 uses a cutting-edge 5.2-inch IPS-Neo screen, which alters the manufacturing process of the LCD molecules to create better viewing angles and contrast. Since viewing angles are mostly stellar on all but the cheapest of modern handsets, there wasn't any real-world difference when using the Honor 7 versus other smartphones on the market.

With a 1080p resolution, it equates to roughly 424 pixels-per-inch. This puts it well above the minimum print resolution standard, meaning text and images are completely free of pixilation. While it can't compete with the QHD screens currently on flagships such as the Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge, this is a perfectly acceptable panel given the price.

Maximum brightness was impressive, beating other devices such as the OnePlus 2 which exist in the same price-bracket. I also found the colour tone to be quite neutral with some excellent contrast; colours felt like they were popping out of the screen. Overall, this device has a very good panel.

PERFORMANCE

Huawei has continually ditched Qualcomm in favour of Chinese microprocessor manufacturer HiSilicon and the new Honor 7 is no exception. It uses the latest Kirin 935 processor, which is the company's flagship chip. Designed to compete with the top-end



The camera captured detailed, if somewhat dull, images



User interface design has a hint of Apple

Qualcomm chips, it mostly hits the mark but suffers from some rather odd performance issues. The single-core benchmark score of 920 puts it in the same level as the last generation HTC One M8, which is a little disappointing. The multi-core score of 3552 is much better, with only the class-leading Samsung Exynos chips beating it.

In practice, navigating the UI is quick and smooth but the gaming aspect takes a massive hit. Playing Asphalt 8: Airborne at medium settings was excellent, but pushing things up to high resulted in a disappointing experience. The unpredictable frame rate distracted heavily from the overall gameplay. At times it would be buttery smooth, only for the game to randomly slow down and stutter uncontrollably. This could be something that a simple firmware update could fix, or it may

be that the Kirin GPU simply can't compete with the likes of Qualcomm's offerings.

SOFTWARE

The Honor 7 runs on Android 5.0, bringing material design themes and performance improvements to boot. Along with the Huawei P8, it also has the latest 3.1 version of the Emotion UI. This custom Android launcher is commonplace on most Huawei devices and is known for having some pretty substantial changes versus the stock software. There's definitely a hint of Apple in the overall UI design, with frosted translucent overlays and slim-line icons in a cool teal finish. The notification and quick-access panels in particular seem to scream iPhone, which isn't necessarily a bad thing.

That said, there are still some areas that hamper the experience and feel somewhat counter-intuitive. The app tray remains completely absent, which is a feature you'll either love or hate depending on how you typically manage your applications. The recent apps page is also displayed in a 2x2 grid, which displays far less overall information than the default Material viewer included with Android.

The Smart Key which we mentioned earlier integrates with the Emotion UI to provide customisable shortcuts according to the tactile feedback applied by the user. The ability to hotkey multiple apps to the button is pretty useful and I found myself using it quite heavily for immediate access to music, fitness and camera applications.

BATTERY

The Honor 7 has a very large 3,100 mAh battery which should mean excellent battery life. However, it seems that the Kirin chip has once again let it down as our battery test measured a less-than-average seven hours 54 minutes. This is only slightly better than handsets with a fraction of the battery capacity, so it makes you wonder where the extra juice is going.

A quick-charge feature is built into the



Honor 7 features the Emotion user interface

Honor 7 which allows it to reach 50 per cent in about 30 minutes and full charge in 1 hour and 25 minutes. As is commonplace with metal unibody devices, the battery is non-removable.

CONCLUSION

For anybody who wants a mid-range smartphone, the Honor 7 is a solid choice and more readily available than the comparative OnePlus 2. A flawed gem would be the best way to describe it, as the device has great aesthetic appeal and some excellent features both physically and on the software side. Navigating the flashy Emotion UI is a wonderfully smooth experience and it's just a shame that the gaming performance and battery life are so decidedly average.

VERDICT

The Honor 7 is a solid handset that has the looks and appeal to captivate many buyers. It's got a great screen and impressive camera which has a few unique features up its sleeve. Unfortunately, it also suffers from mixed performance that seems to be a result of the Kirin chipset. If you're a keen mobile gamer, this could be an issue.

- + Good camera
- + Appealing design
- + Excellent screen
- Mixed gaming performance
- Non-removable battery
- Semi-plastic finish

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★



100% BUBBLE FREE GADGET PROTECTION

Crystalusion™ - Liquid Glass Protection is a revolutionary new way to protect Smartphones, Tablets and Devices using one of the most advanced nanotechnologies in the world. Manufactured in Germany Crystalusion™ protects every device from Dirt, Oil, Dust, Bacteria and Abrasion – and because Crystalusion™ is applied as a liquid it's compatible with every mobile device, any size any shape!



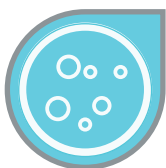
Diamond Tested



100% Invisible



Easy Clean



Anti Bacteria



Bubble Free



Available from www.crystalusion.com and in stores



iPad Decks

01 /

Alesis iO Mix

Cheapest price: £139.99 ★★★★★

The Alesis iO Mix is a four-channel mixer interface for the iPad tablet that provides a lot of connectivity for a cheap price. This is reflected in the design, which is mostly definitely on the plastic side. Buttons and knobs wobble heavily, while the budget materials don't exactly conjure up the image of 'premium equipment'. Still, this is not a premium device so such a comparison would be unfair. Unsurprisingly, the limitations of the iPad audio interface itself are the biggest annoyance. The Alesis iO Mix is quite capable of multitrack recording up to four devices, whereas the iPad can only manage two at best. We tried it through various sources including microphone, guitar and even some synth recording. Unfortunately, it's not possible to control synthesizers from within your DAW due to a lack of midi or USB connectivity. Pre-amps were acceptable in quality and phantom power is a big plus. Gain levels were a little disappointing, with more sensitive devices struggling to get the volume needed for comfortable recording. On the other hand, overall signal noise was low when paired with a good input source. The low-latency feature worked well, with no noticeable delay when tracking live audio.

Verdict: To get a true iPad mixer for only £139.99 from some retailers, there is little to get particularly grumpy about.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| + Pleasingly cheap | - Feels quite plastic |
| + Low noise pre-amps | - iPad connector is a little fiddly |
| + Lots of input connectivity | - No Midi |



02 /

Alesis iO Dock II

Cheapest price: £129.00 ★★★★★

The Alesis iO Dock II is a direct successor to the first iteration and on passing glance you'd be hard-pressed to see any difference. On the rear we find that the video out jack has disappeared, which could be a concern for those who want to see things on the big screen. On the plus side, the connector has been altered to function much like the iO Mix. This allows it to be compatible with far more iPad devices, though newer models won't exactly fit correctly. On the topic of fit, even older generation iPads feel somewhat loose when inside the iO Dock. It is lucky that the device remains most of its life in a stationary position on the table, as I'd be worried about my precious tablet falling out otherwise. Connectivity options more than make up for this however, with two microphone inputs, phantom power and USB/Midi connectivity. The latter is an excellent addition that allows the use of external hardware such as a keyboard or synthesizer. It is even possible to use it as a Midi controller within a desktop environment, as I discovered when I used it within Cubase to control a soft-synth. With regards to preamp quality and overall sound it is almost identical to the iO Mix, which is no bad thing either.

Verdict: While it doesn't have the input connectivity of the iO Mix, we'd argue that the inclusion of Midi connectivity actually makes the iO Dock more versatile.

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| + Enough connectivity | - Feels plastic |
| + Midi and USB a big bonus | - iPad doesn't exactly feel secure |
| + Cheap | - Video out jack disappeared |



Audio Interfaces

03 /

IK Multimedia iRig Pro

Cheapest price: £86.99



The iRig Pro is a versatile audio interface that works on all iOS devices. Featuring a combo XLR/Jack cable, it includes phantom power via a handy 9V battery included in the box. Various breakout cables also allow both audio and Midi information to be transmitted, making it a handy device for all kinds of uses. Unlike the iRig UA, which focuses primarily on guitar, the Pro can be used for vocals and instruments. Connecting it is simple and the host of included cables mean that it's compatible with both older and newer Apple devices. Build quality is a little on the plastic side, with the gain dial wobbling under strenuous use. Still, the unit carries a clean appearance and the rubberised finish does a good job of keeping it steady on a slippery surface. The lack of a headphone jack is a minor annoyance which isn't so much of an issue on iOS due to the reliable latency-free recording. The iOS version ships with three completely free pieces of software. The first is the AmpliTube application, which offers the same experience as its Android counterpart. There's also the popular sampler SampleTank included, plus an excellent iGrand Piano emulator app. All in all a very complete package.

Verdict: A brilliant audio interface that has all the connectivity you could ever need in a tiny, convenient package.

- + Phantom power
- + Plenty of bundled apps
- + Tons of connectivity for its size
- Average build
- Gain and phantom power dials fiddly
- No headphone out



04



04 /

IK Multimedia iRig UA

Cheapest price: £71.00



Latency has always been something of an issue for Android. Aside from a select group of higher-end devices, most have a rather unfavourable amount of lag between actually recording something and hearing it in playback. IK Multimedia has done away with this and released the iRig UA, which carries out all the audio processing in a tiny no bigger than a bulky credit card. Aimed at electric guitar users, the device is for smartphones only and there's currently no tablet version on the horizon. This will no doubt disappoint the many Nexus 7 and Samsung Galaxy Tab owners in the world. It comes with a headphone jack and included auxiliary port for listening to a secondary source during playback, useful if you want to practice or record a cover of your favourite track. You've also got the ability to use it as a dedicated audio card for your Mac or PC, which is handy if you want a portable recording unit on the move. It's designed to be used with the AmpliTube UA software, which provides several high quality amp emulations in a stompbox-style interface. You get more than 20 included in the mobile application, with licensed gear from the likes of Fender and Orange. It's a fantastic package for a cheap price and, more importantly, fills a huge gap in the limitations of the Android OS.

Verdict: If you're an Android user who's desperate to record guitar licks, this is the answer to all of your woes.

- + Inexpensive
- + Low latency works
- + Aux input
- Can't charge device while playing
- Volume control quite small
- More plastic

Microphones

05 /

Apogee MiC

Cheapest price: 139.99



Apogee is a company you would typically associate with very expensive pro studio gear, so it's surprising to see it venture into the mobile production market. The Apogee MiC is a full USB condenser microphone that features a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch diaphragm behind a metal grille. It features a cardioid polar pattern with quite a wide angle, meaning it is surprisingly easy to capture two people's voices at once. This does have the caveat of rejecting less noise but it makes sense as it gives the microphone more use in a group recording environment. The proximity effect is also minimal, which is likely a design choice to make it more multi-functional. It records at a resolution of 24-bit 44.1/48KHz, though a higher 96KHz version is available for about £50 more. Oddly, the cheaper version has a 30-pin iOS cable, while the 96KHz version carries a lightning adapter instead. This somewhat limits which devices they are compatible with unless you're willing to hunt down an extra cable. Sound-wise, it's very hard to fault the Apogee. For the price, you're getting an incredibly capable microphone that is useful for a variety of tasks. Vocal performance is very good while instruments (especially acoustic) shine through very well. There's not too much warmth and clarity is top notch without sounding overly harsh.

Verdict: The Apogee MiC has a sound that is applicable to a variety of uses, whether instrumental or vocal based.

- + Well built
- + Natural sounding
- + Suitable for a variety of recordings
- No headphone jack
- Connector bundling is odd
- Lets in a little more background noise than others

06



05

06 /

IK Multimedia iRig Mic Studio

Cheapest price: 123.00



The iRig Mic Studio is a feature-packed 1-inch condenser microphone with a headphone jack for direct monitoring. It comes with plenty of cables in the box for an all manner of recording purposes, though a 30-pin iPad connector must be purchased as an optional extra. Build quality is decent, with an all-metal finish that helps to give it some weight. The buttons are a little on the plastic side, with some wobble during use. It features a cardioid polar pattern that is narrower than the Apogee, making it a good choice for solo podcasting duties and instrumentals. Audio recording is done at 24-bit 44.1KHz/48KHz, which is the same as the basic Apogee and enough for most users. Alongside the hardware itself, IK have also released an application specifically tailored to the microphone. 'Mic Room' processes the signal to make it sound like a variety of famous recording devices. Pairing this with Audiobus and Cubasis, it is possible to get a very robust recording setup using an iPad as the centrepiece. In terms of sound, the Mic Studio is rich and smooth though definitely a little warmer than the Apogee. This is likely a result of the proximity effect which is much more defined. Those who want that broadcast fullness at the bottom of their voices will appreciate it, though it does mean that novices will need to be more careful about microphone placement.

Verdict: Another brilliant iPad microphone that is a great choice for the solo broadcaster or those who want a little more focus in their sound.

- + Great podcast microphone
- + Very portable
- + Headphone jack built-in
- Buttons are a bit wobbly
- Buttons are very small
- No iPad connector included

Keyboards and Groove Boxes

07 /

IK Multimedia iRig Pads

Cheapest price: £91.99



The iRig Pads is an excellent choice for somebody who wants a low-cost pad controller with a similar feel to MPC-style hardware sequencers. While you won't get the colour display and hardware editing functions of more expensive devices, you do still get an included application that makes this excellent to use with an iPad. Build quality is acceptable, with an all-plastic body that flexes a little bit but doesn't feel too bad considering the low asking price. It's also incredibly small, making it very portable for taking to gigs or throwing in a rucksack. The eight pads are solid rubber with a good amount of travel and they feature full LED-RGB backlighting, meaning they change colour in response to differing pressure and modes. Latency is equally pleasing, with no perceivable lag between pad triggering and note response. Two included cables allow you to use it with both an iPad and/or a desktop computer via Midi, giving the device a fair bit of versatility within the studio. The included SampleTank iOS application is derived from its bigger desktop brother and features more than 600 instruments plus more via in-app purchases. A handful of the included samples are excellent, while the rest are pretty average. You can, of course, use it with the full desktop version of SampleTank as well. The interface is slick and easy to use, with basic recording and loop functionalities that should be enough for the average iOS user.

Verdict: The quality of the application is very good and the unit itself is perfect for the live performer. Considering the price, this is worth a look for the iPad musicians among us.

- + Very portable
- + Good quality pads
- + Multi-use
- Flexes under pressure
- Included lighting and USB cable only (30-pin is optional)
- Some of the samples feel a bit tacky



07

08 /

CME Pro XKey

Cheapest price: £69.00



When you've got a keyboard that's endorsed by the legendary Jordan Rudess, you better hope that it's worth the hype! On initial use, the CME Pro XKey certainly feels like it. This thing is built like a tank, with a solid metal outer shell and design aesthetics that wouldn't look out of place on an Apple product. Putting it next to our office iMacs, it almost looked like it belonged there. Setup on a desktop is quick and easy with no additional drivers needed, though the lack of an iPad connector means you'll need to purchase an additional cable for tablet use. Once it's hooked up to the iPad, it just works, plain and simple. The full-size keys are very responsive given their minimal travel and I was able to capture velocity variations easily. The chiclet styling does take some getting used to, however, and at times it felt like typing on a computer keyboard rather than playing an instrument. The modulation functions are also a little strange, with buttons rather than dedicated wheels. While I can understand it from a space-saving point of view, I think it would've been better utilised as a pair of touch-sensitive sliders. That said, this is just about the smallest Midi keyboard you can get and such would be perfect for any mobile producer on the road.

Verdict: Looks perfectly at home next to your iPad device and is built like a tank. If you can get used to its quirks, this a solid Midi keyboard that is made for portable use.

- + Brilliant design
- + Very light and portable
- + Full-sized keys
- iPad connector not included
- Chiclet keys take a bit of getting used to
- Mod-wheel use is fiddly

08



CASH CONVERTERS

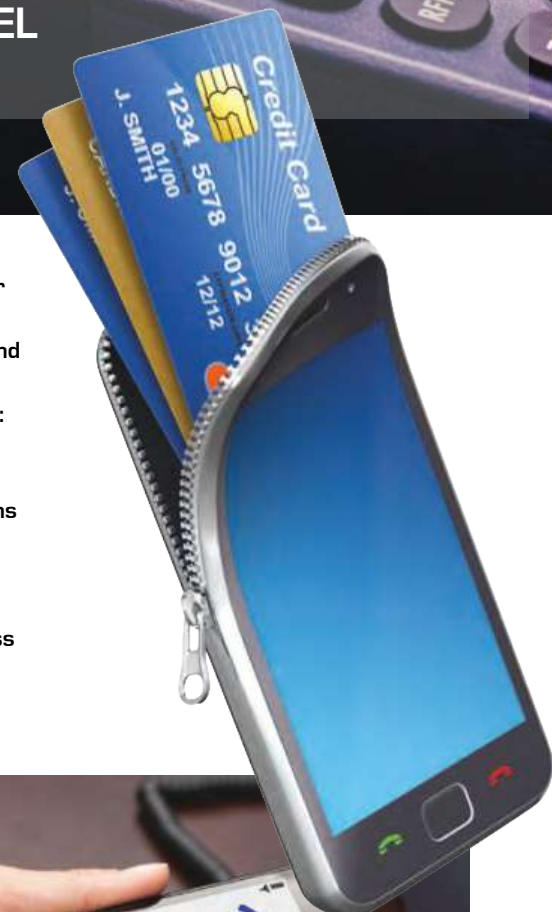
APPLE'S NEW AND SECURE WAY OF PAYING FOR THINGS WITHOUT CASH OR CARDS WILL MAKE CASH AND PLASTIC SEEM A THING OF THE PAST. HERE'S OUR ANALYSIS AND REVIEW OF THE NOVEL NEW SYSTEM SO FAR.

So, you're waiting for your morning coffee fix and here it comes. Steaming frothy cappuccino with a nice chocolate muffin on the side. You reach into your wallet, pull out a piece of paper which looks like a £5 note, hand it to the cashier, who takes it, counts out your change, and gives you a handful of small metal disks which jingle away in your pocket until they fall out and are lost forever down the back of the sofa.

Crazy huh? Except now you've got a new iPhone. And when your coffee and muffin arrives you do this: touch the "wallet" app on the screen, touch the debit card icon, touch the fingerprint ID icon. hold the phone next to the credit card reader by the cashier and – ping – you've paid. That's it. Done. Finished.

Welcome to Apple Pay. Once you've tried it you are unlikely to go back to the paper money and coins again. It may seem like magic but it is quite simple. Inside your iPhone 6 (generation onward) is a chip that detects a transmitter (ie the shop's card reader) to communicate without any kind of internet connection. Unlike Bluetooth you don't need to pair the equipment or key in a code

If you have been using Oyster cards on London buses and the Tube or buying items with contactless debit or credit card, you will already be familiar with near field communication (NFC). Of course, you can only use Apple Pay at a participating retailer. And you can only use it if your bank supports Apple Pay. For example (at time of writing), Barclays was still not an Apple Pay partner.



Examples of more common uses of near field communication

HOW TO SET UP APPLE PAY

Want to use Apple Pay but not sure how?
No problem! Here's how to set it up.

1



Ensure that your bank supports Apple Pay. Barclays, Lloyds and Bank of Scotland have not joined yet [at the time of writing], Call your bank or check online.

2



Open Passbook on your iPhone or iPad. Select the option for Apple Pay. Press next

3



Place your card face up on a flat surface. Hold the phone over it. Frame the card.

4



Fill in the fields for your name, expiry date, security code. Press Next.

5



Verify your card by text message, via email. Or call your bank on the number provided. Press 'Next'.

6



You will receive a verification code.

7



Enter the code given and press 'Next'.

8



Congratulations! Start using Apple Pay.

+ You can add more than one card to your account using the same procedure.

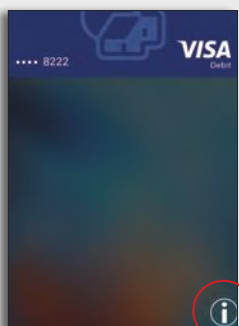
HOW DO I REMOVE A CARD FROM APPLE PAY?



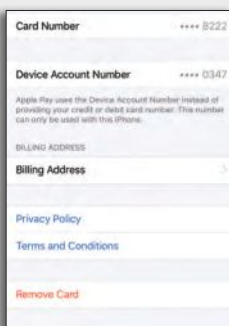
1. Open Passbook on your iPhone or iPad



2. Select the card to remove



3. Press the little i symbol inside the circle



4. Scroll down to the bottom of the page



5. Press 'Remove Card'

ALL DONE.
YOUR CARD
IS NO LONGER
LINKED TO
APPLE PAY

APPLE PAY IN ACTION

HOW EASY IT IS TO USE APPLE PAY?

 **11:00**AM

Pret a Manger. Place iPhone 6 on the reader. Screen message asks for Touch ID fingerprint. 'Done!' Simple, swift and easy. Full marks for Apple Pay Pret.



 **11:20**AM

Boots. Apply iPhone 6 to card reader. Oops. iPhone requests 'Hold Near Reader to Pay'. I couldn't get it much closer. Fortunately, the cashier is familiar with the problem and suggests lifting it off the reader and then set it down again. Result!



 **11:35AM**

The Body Shop. Customer consultant Samirah processes the transaction so quickly we barely have time to snap a pic. The process of touching phone to reader, thumb to fingerprint scanner, accept items, is becoming second nature.



 **11:50AM**

Starbucks. Staff warn me that sometimes the machine doesn't work. Indeed Apple Pay struggles to connect to the card reader. I try lifting it up and putting it down again. No luck. It gives up on fingerprint recognition and asks me for my passcode. Even that doesn't work. The transaction times out. My contactless debit card works. For some reason Starbucks' system isn't in the mood for Apple Pay.



CONCLUSION

Apple Pay works, although with a few hiccups along the way. Don't rely on it as your only means of payment, especially given the limited number of retail outlets and companies that accept Apple Pay. It's great for those moments when you don't want to fumble for loose change. It also doesn't seem to have a minimum spend limit. A £1.50 transaction went through with no difficulty. You'll need to have the top half of your phone over the reader as the NFC transmitter chip in the iPhone 6 is about a third of the way down from the top edge of the phone. The closer it is to the reader, the better.

The final frontier

This month sees a console classic make its mobile debut plus outings for some franchise favourites

Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

Final Fantasy VII

£11.99 iOS only

This classic Playstation title finally arrives on mobile platforms in a faithful port of the original. Take control of Cloud Strife as he once again embarks on the quest to hunt down legendary Shinra soldier Sephiroth. The virtual buttons are a bit lazy and the ability to turn off random battles is suspect, but the core experience remains one of the best Final Fantasy games ever made.



Call of Champions

Free (in-app purchases) iOS (Android coming soon)

A 3v3 battler with impressive 3D graphics and plenty of classes. Battles are divided into five-minute bursts, with each character using a variety of abilities to defeat the other team. Items are absent and the game is incredibly easy to learn, making the pick-up-and-play aspect perfect for mobile gamers.



Ghostbusters Puzzle Fighter

Free (in-app purchases) iOS only

A fun film cash-in that will while away hours on the tube. Featuring the cast of the classic 1984 film, combos deal damage to enemy ghosts which help the ensuing fight. Bigger combos deal more damage and gem symbols determine which character attacks.



Hearthstone: Grand Tournament

Free (in-app purchases) Android and iOS

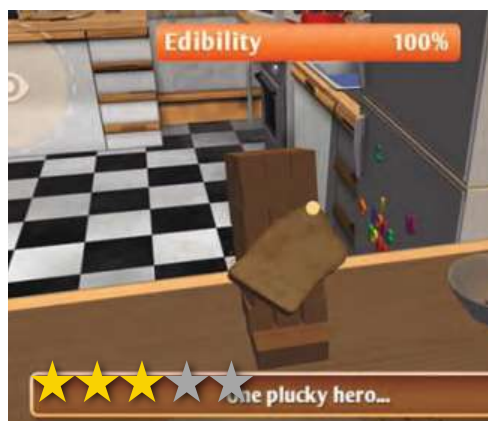
Less of a new game and more of an expansion, Hearthstone: Grand Tournament brings 132 new cards plus some exclusive tournament card packs. There's also another 16 uncollectible cards that can only be obtained during a match.



I am Bread

£3.99 iOS (Android coming soon)

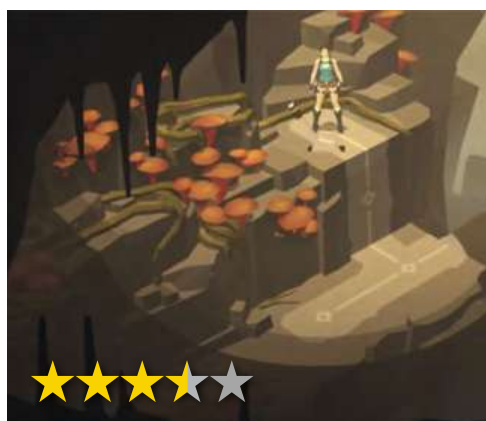
From the minds that brought you Surgeon Simulator comes an even crazier variant. I am Bread puts you in control of a slice of... you guessed it, bread as it makes a perilous journey through the house to the toaster. The controls on this version are pretty fiddly, especially if you're playing on a smaller screen. Still, if you can put up with them, the game is great fun. If a little infuriating.



Lara Croft Go

£3.99 Android and iOS

After the recent debut of the original Tomb Raider title on mobile platforms, Lara Croft is back again in this platforming puzzle title which bears a similar resemblance to Hitman Go. Guide her through the level one move at a time, avoiding hazards along the way. It's a pity that the game is so short, as it's great fun while it lasts.



Pokemon Shuffle

Free (in-app purchases) Android and iOS

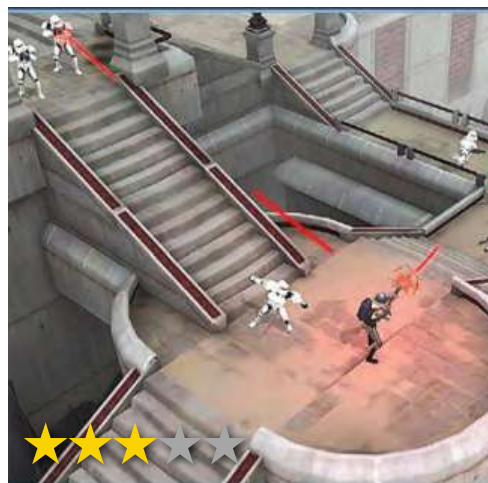
Nintendo's first mobile game carries the popularity of the Pokemon franchise under its wing. If you've played the 3DS version already, you'll likely know what to expect here. It's a match three puzzler where your combos will be used to defeat the enemy Pokemon in battle. It's a novel theme made all the better by colourful graphics and addictive gameplay. A good first outing for Nintendo.



Star Wars: Uprising

Free (in-app purchases) Android and iOS

With the Star Wars hype getting into full swing, there's plenty of smartphone games now available. Newest on the list is Star Wars: Uprising, a 3D arena shooter which follows a lowly smuggler as he works his way to the top. The rinse and repeat gameplay borders on the repetitive at times but it's still a fun experience.



Walking Dead: Road To Survival

Free (in-app purchases) Android and iOS

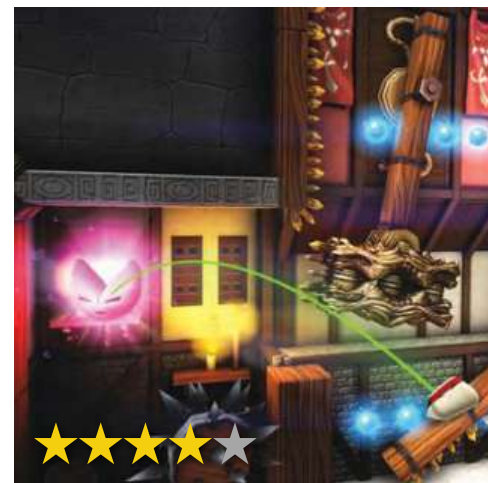
Based on the comic, this turn-based RPG centres around the infamous Phillip Blake, aka The Governor, before his power-hungry takeover of Woodbury. You'll control the usual band of survivors while using the town of Woodbury as a refuelling hub.



Worms 4

£3.99 iOS only

The always popular Worms franchise reaches its fourth mobile instalment and includes new weapons and locations in which to do battle. Game mechanics will be familiar to previous Worms players; simply pick either the red or blue team and take turns wiping each other out across a number of bizarre locales.



Shame of the game

The latest iOS and Android apps offer some useful, and not so useful, tools for your phone

Reviewer: Manny Pham – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

Shame Bell

(Free iOS and Android)

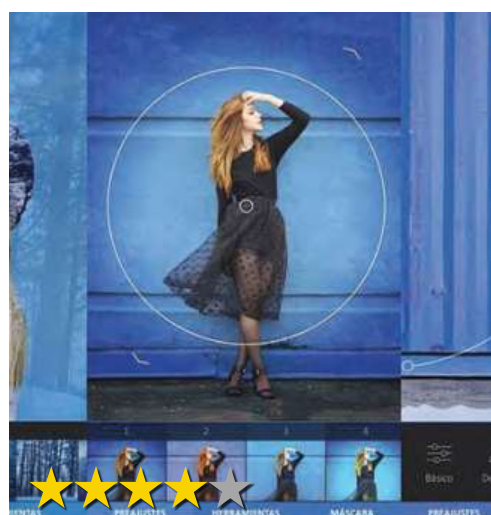
Dying for the new series of Game of Thrones? It's going to be a while so why not pass the time by following, shaming and annoying that friend of yours who's a bit like Cersei Lannister. You know which one.



Enlight

£2.99 (iOS)

The iPhone has an amazing camera but lacks a lot of manual controls to make your pictures even better. Which is why you need Enlight on your smartphone, to help you edit those holiday pictures to ensure maximum jealousy from your friends.



Stoptober 2015

Free (iOS and Android)

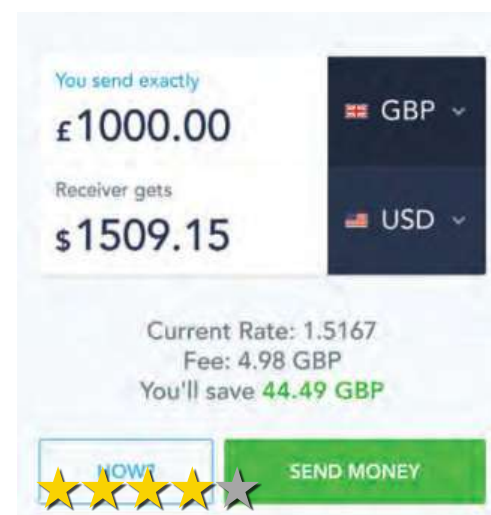
It's never too late to kick the habit and with Stoptober 2015 you can achieve just that. With a daily cigarette counter, money saver meter and many other features to keep you on track, giving up smoking is made just a little bit easier.



TransferWise

Free (iOS and Android)

Banks. Who likes them? If you actually answered that with a yes, put this down and leave. To those who didn't, download TransferWise as the app prides itself on saving you up to 89% when transferring money abroad.



VHS Camera Recorder

£0.99 (Android)

Feeling nostalgic? Despise the age of Instagram and filters? Here's a massive throwback for you as VHS Camera Recorder allows you to film grainy videos, with the date slapped on it, just like those embarrassing home videos your parents have of you somewhere.



360 Security Lite

Free (Android)

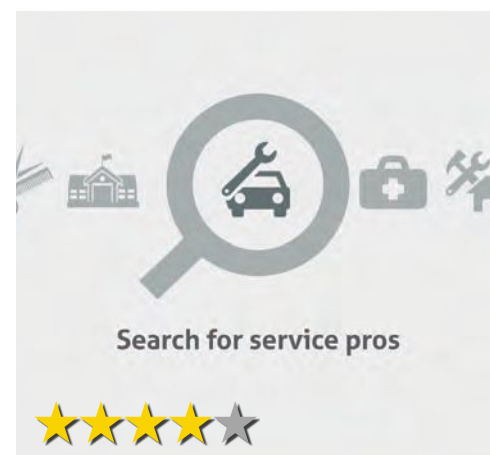
Not everyone can afford a phone that smashes Geekbench scores. This app is stated as 'exclusively designed for phones with less than 1GB of memory'. Packed with a bloatware cleaner and antivirus software, it is an essential for your wee Android device.



Home Review

Free (Windows)

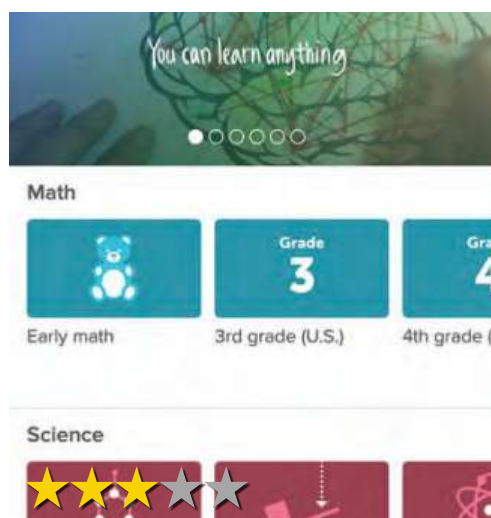
An experimental app that helps you look for local services such as electricians, plumbers and even legal services. Don't be caught out needing a service that you never thought you would need with this polished new app.



Khan Academy

Free (iOS and Android)

Khan Academy has a stellar reputation for bringing free education to those who desire it, by offering free exercises on its website. With this app you can learn something new every day. To live is learn, and to learn is to live. Live. Learn.



Fingerprint Lock Screen

Free (Android)

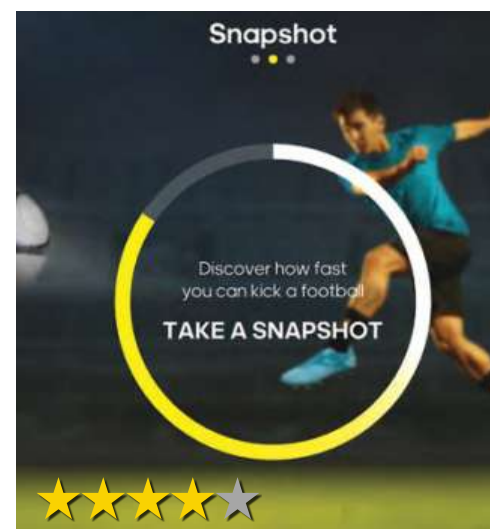
DO NOT DOWNLOAD THIS APP. Apart from the fact that the app does not actually scan your fingerprint, as that requires a physical scanner, it also crashes your phone, forcing you to restart it most of the time when in use.



Adidas Snapshot

Free (iOS and Android)

Want to settle who can blast the ball harder? Well now you can with Adidas Snapshot, which records the power and trajectory of your shots. The app is snappy and easy to use so a little competition to see who's keeper first is no problem.



Nintendo 3DS

M2 takes the helm with an exciting revamp of the classic 16-bit shooter

Reviewer: Manny Pham – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

3D Gunstar Heroes ★★★★★

Developer: M2 **Publisher:** M2

Where to Buy: Nintendo eShop **Price:** £4.49

Yet another Sega port in the shape of Gunstar Heroes. M2 again takes the helm for this incarnation of the Mega Drive classic and does it well by not changing too much, simply polishing and improving everything that everyone loved about the original.

M2 is a specialist in revamping retro games, having done so already for Sega on the 3DS with Ecco the Dolphin, Altered Beast and Streets of Rage 2. M2 has stuck to what it did for the aforementioned titles and remained respectful by keeping that magical 16-bit look. The improved graphics remain stellar, even on full 3D, which works well even when there's complete chaos on the screen (which is often). There is no slow down whatsoever as you blast your way through armies of robots. This is what makes Gunstar Heroes stand out from other side-scrolling shooters – the chaos and the claustrophobic spaces you're squeezed into as you avoid showers of bullets.

There will always be comparison with Contra. Contra went for that machismo 1980s action movie feel whereas Gunstar Heroes went full-tilt crazy anime, with over-exaggerated anime screams included. This also complements how expressive the playable characters are as they wince in pain as they take damage and the

transition of their look as you spray death all over the screen in all directions.

You take control of Gunstar Red or Blue (or both in multiplayer) as you strive to stop the vicious Colonel Red from fulfilling his desire of awakening God-like robot Golden Silver. Gunstar Heroes has a plot that will have you in awe with its twists and turns as you battle through the game. I won't say any more for those playing it for the first time but this plot will stick to you for a while after playing.

Aside from picking up a gun and spraying it everywhere, our heroes can also slide and grapple enemies, getting themselves out of sticky spots. But of course the pew-pew part of the gameplay is what drives the game. You switch weapons as you pick up new ones from fallen enemies. Switching isn't the only option as you can combine weapons too for some surprising results! This adds replay value as more experimental players would want to play it all over again to try all the combinations and to see which one works better on the stage bosses. There are also new inclusions to the game. Mega Life mode doubles your vitality to make a challenging game a bit easier. Still too hard? Well then switch on to Gunslinger mode, which puts every gun at your disposal right from the start.

Gunstar Heroes has reminded us why it is such a classic. M2 has done it again with a Sega port and made an old game feel like a new one. You will pour countless hours into learning enemy move sets and strive for perfection as Gunstar Heroes takes you on an adventure.



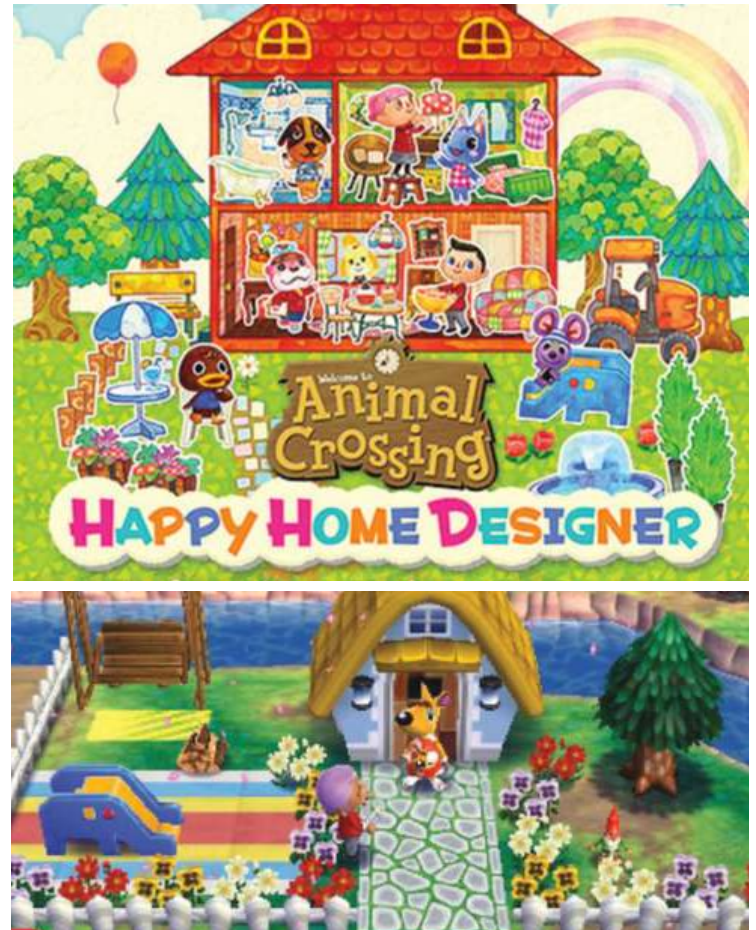
Animal Crossing: ★★★★★ Happy Home Designer

Developer: Nintendo EAD Group 2 **Publisher:** Nintendo
Where to Buy: In-Store **Price:** £34.99

Welcome back to the world of Animal Crossing where you can once again escape your own harsh reality for a soft, vibrant and colourful world. This time there's a massive focus on (you guessed it) home designing – one of the most fun aspects of the Animal Crossing games since the series debuted on these shores in 2003 on the GameCube.

You take charge of designing homes, amenity buildings and themed buildings as you design creative bespoke housing for the anthropomorphic animal villagers. There are more than 300 villagers to curate, each with their own style and vision, meaning you'll have to take on jobs and do your best to not curtail them of what they desire. Sounds a bit scary but it really isn't as there isn't a grading system, just the villagers expressing their satisfaction. There's no real in-game reward or progression, which can be quite frustrating, but that is more than made up for with the array of possibilities made available to you in the designing department. Rearranging furniture is so much easier now, with a simple click and drag interface, and those super rare pieces of furniture you struggled to find on Animal Crossing: New Leaf are now more accessible.

What really motivates you to carry on and do your best is the online Happy Home Network, which allows you to upload the buildings you designed and have them rated by fellow gamers. Oh, and there's no aggressive mole on your case this time too.



Shovel Knight: ★★★★★ Plague of Shadows

Developer: Yacht Club Games **Publisher:** Yacht Club Games **Where to buy:** eShop and In-Store Oct 16 **Price:** Free (only available with Shovel Knight purchased)

Shovel Knight was one of the standout titles of 2014 and we've wanted more ever since. Plague of Shadows is exactly what the doctor ordered, with a completely new dimension to the game as you take control of one of the baddies, Plague Knight.

Shovel Knight: Plague of Shadows takes an alternate route to the events in Shovel Knight. Shovel Knight failed in his attempt to defeat Enchantress and evil now rules the land. You take control of Plague Knight, who decides to no longer be a lackey and journeys through the land to create an ultimate potion that grants the user a single wish. The levels are almost completely similar but revamped to cater to Plague Knight's capabilities. There are also new hidden areas in stages and completely new paths, which makes this feel like a new game.

Attacking with Plague Knight is completely different as he throws timed bombs instead of Shovel Knight's direct spading approach. You'll find yourself pausing most of the time to switch between bombs as different bombs make certain stages easier. But this doesn't detriment the game much as you upgrade Plague Knight and fulfil his one and only desire in this game of romance and plot twists.

PlayStation Vita

Reckon there's no need for yet another retro-inspired shooter? Well think again

Reviewer: Manny Pham – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

Super Time Force Ultra ★★★★★

Developer: Cappybara Games **Publisher:** Cappybara Games **Where to Buy:** PlayStation Store **Price:** £13.9

You could be forgiven for thinking that we at What Mobile only play retro or retro-inspired side scrolling shooters (we so do). Well that image is not going to change with this review. Super Time Force Ultra finally makes its way to current-generation Sony consoles, more than a year after being released for the PC and Xbox One.

Cappybara Games is an indie developer from Canada that is widely renowned in the video games world with a stellar reputation. Known for the acclaimed Critter Crunch in 2009, Cappybara Games has done it again and have brought us more retro goodness in the revamped Super Time Force Ultra.

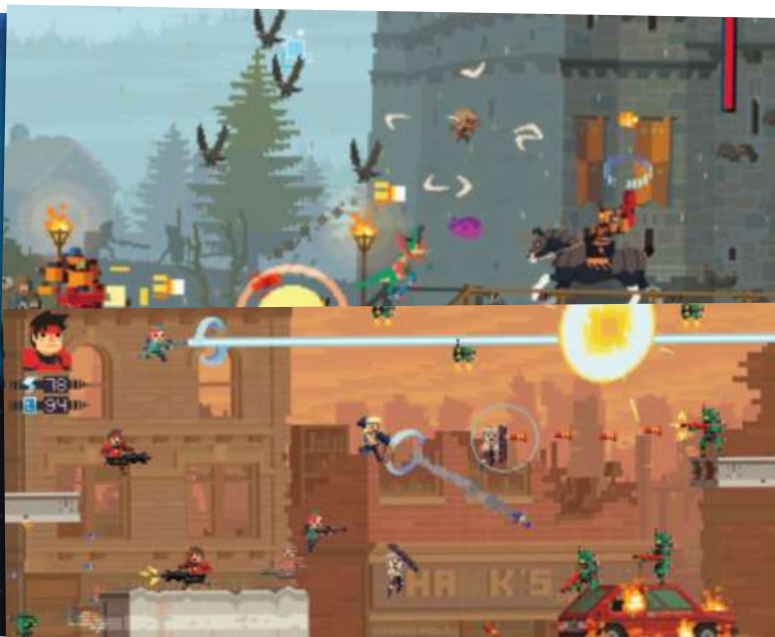
Set in the distant future where humans have mastered time travel and have reality as putty in their hands, you play as a squad of elite soldiers called (drum roll please) Super Time Force. The Super Time Force are commanded by Commander Repeatski to stop the peace-keeping forces of the 'evil' Doctor Infinity. Commander Repeatski wants to send the force back in time to alter history for the greater good whereas Doctor Infinity is trying to prevent you from distorting history and changing the shape of the future. I don't know about you but at first I know who I'd side with, with all that Doctor Who has taught me. The plot cannot be delved into without too much being given away.

There are six worlds for you to jump into, each one distinctive and ready for you to complete in any order. The variety of the six stages keep the game feeling so fresh as you jump from saving the dinosaurs from extinction, to jousting knights with bullets in the middle ages.

You can already tell that Super Time Force Ultra does not take itself seriously. From the ridiculous levels that you sludge through (literally with the sewer level), to the downright weird things that characters say in the game. You'll see the game has its own unique charm as the homage to 1980s and 1990s culture runs through out the game. The visuals contribute to this massively with the purposely pixelated graphics, which is done so well with the enemy and level designs. Seeing a robot plume blocks of smoke never looked so satisfying.

Being that retro-inspired game, you'd expect those tight, responsive controls that are synonymous with the 8- and 16-bit era. Shooting enemies from a diagonal angle is quite a chore and can literally lead you to death as your character would move as you aim, marching you into a death laser. The time-out feature, thankfully, works well when this happens; you're given 30 time-outs, in which you rewind time to any point you choose. You can then switch to a different character who is more suited for the situation.

If you've blasted through many retro shooters already and think that another would just be too much, it wouldn't be the case with Super Time Force Ultra. It feels like a fresh experience that will keep you entertained for a while.



The Swindle



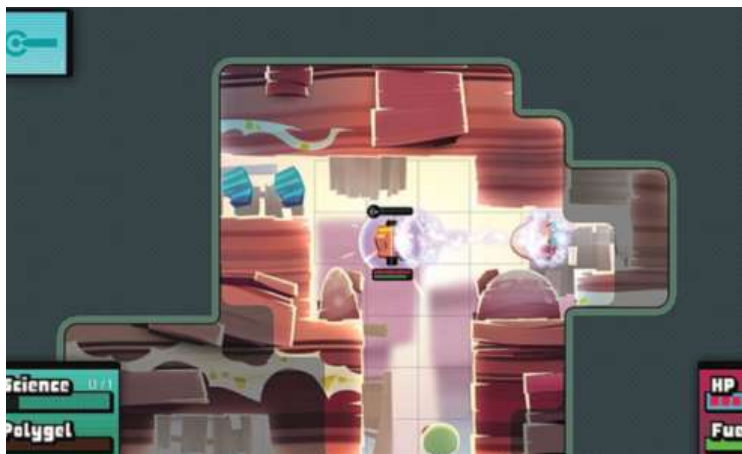
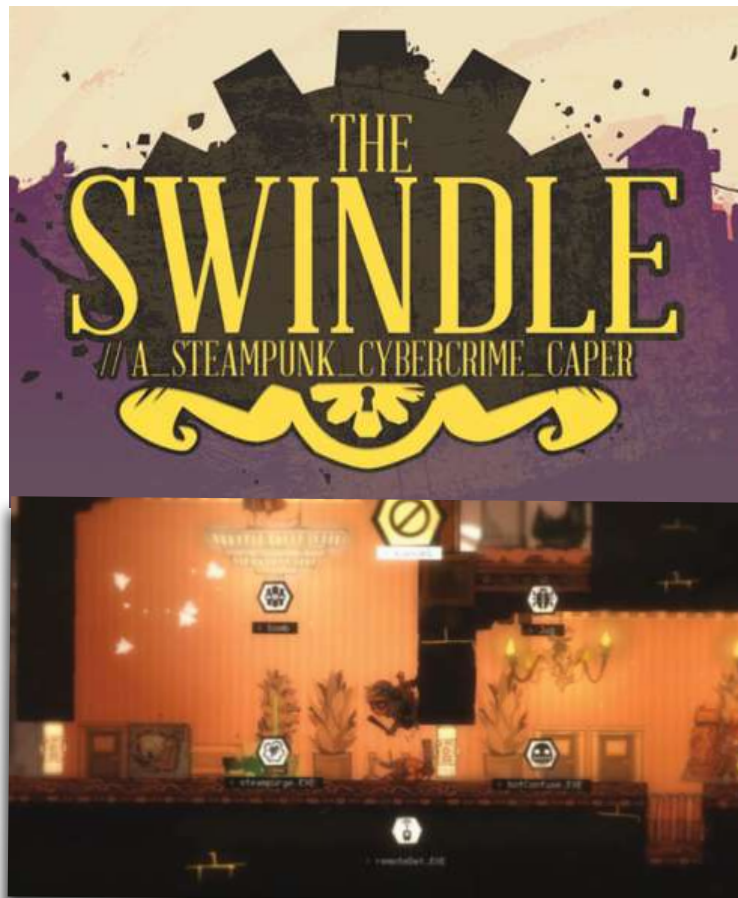
Developer: Size Five Games **Publisher:** Curve Digital

Where to Buy: PS Vita Store **Price:** £11.99

Size Five Games is a British indie developer that previously developed Ben There, Dan That! A game that could be bought for a 'donation', it was widely praised as being better than 'alright'. Fast forward to the present day and we have a more polished game. The Swindle is a platforming heist with a gorgeous steampunk backdrop as you attempt to commit cybercrime to save all crime.

The story is that Scotland Yard have developed an incredible piece of technology called the 'The Basilisk Project'. In 100 days it will be activated and it will give the police surveillance powers George Orwell would flinch at. So in 100 days you have to level up, gear up and get ready to fight the power. The Swindle is unforgiving in the same vein as Dark Souls. Die and you will lose everything that you gained from the level, and (and here's the cherry on top) you also lose a day on the counter to the activation of The Basilisk Project.

The Swindle is less about skill and more about the upgrades that you possess. With that in mind your greed takes over, you outstay your welcome in a stage when it was best to take what you can and leave! But that tension makes your experience oh so more masochistically delicious. The Swindle is immensely fun, with tight controls and brilliant sounds; what brings it down is the lack of a tutorial. For £11.99 it's a steal.



Nova-111



Developer: Funkatronic Labs **Publisher:** Curve Digital

Where to Buy: PlayStation Store **Price:** £11.99

Funkatronic Labs has given us a nice little head scratcher in the form of Nova-111, a turn-based puzzle game developed by the Californian-based indie developer.

You're tasked with rescuing your fellow scientists, all 111 of them, as an experiment has gone wrong ripping the fabric of time and space. To save the day you have to solve a series of puzzles. You will also do battle with aliens as they literally charge at you, while you simultaneously figure out how to get through the stage. The game's mechanic is quite refreshing to those who have hardly played puzzle games. You are forced to watch and learn as each enemy requires patience and a keen eye to vanquish. With your trusty orange ship Nova and Dr Science (first scientist you rescue), you will traverse this ruined world, while upgrading Nova with lasers, bombs and the ability to control time (which is pretty cool).

Nova-111 is extremely short, providing four to five hours of gameplay, easily doable in one sitting. That's without rescuing all 111 scientists, so if you're a perfectionist you may be able to squeeze out another two hours. By doing so stage grades will be improved and there are online leaderboards for you to rank in if you're feeling competitive. Despite how short it is, Nova-111 is addictive and will have you wanting to do it all again on new game+. Not enough? Then turn on the cheats and rip through everything that dared to make you think.

WHAT MOBILE

BUYER'S GUIDE

Buying a new device can be a difficult decision. Our comprehensive buyer's guide is here to help you.



55 Phone reviews

85 Tablet reviews

94 Wearables reviews



Acer Liquid Jade

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £199

www.acer.co.uk

A decent handset from a smaller brand, the Liquid Jade has all the components in place to be a much better handset than it actually is. What holds it back is Acer's lack of polish when compared with bigger brands such as Motorola. The end result is a handset that you could settle for, but probably shouldn't.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.3GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8/16GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 140.5 x 69 x 7.5mm
Weight 110g
Battery 2,100 mAh

VERDICT: A decent low-end handset, but there are too many better alternatives.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Acer Z220

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £50

www.acer.co.uk

The Acer Z220 performs solidly as a communications device but anything extra-curricular is asking too much. Should you decide to purchase one, there are too many add-ons you have to buy externally, which defeats the purpose of a budget phone. If you're looking for a basic device that can connect to the internet, make calls and text, this could be for you.

OS Android Lollipop v5.0
Processor 1.2 GHz Qualcomm MSM8210 Dual-core
Screen 4.0-inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM (8GB), 2GB RAM (16GB)
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes,

up to 32GB
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 720p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 125.3 x 64 x 9.6 mm
Weight 120g
Battery 1300mAh

VERDICT: A solid budget phone for calls and texts, but that's all it's really good for.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Alcatel One Touch Pop S3

Reviewed: September 2014, price: £80

www.alcatelonetouch.com/uk

The Alcatel One Touch POP S3 has its merits, especially taking into account the sub-£100 price of the device. The problem here is that by making room for 4G capability Alcatel has been forced to make cutbacks in crucial areas. However, if you are simply after the option to access faster web browsing and app speeds on the go, then the POP S3 offers you that at the cheapest price possible.

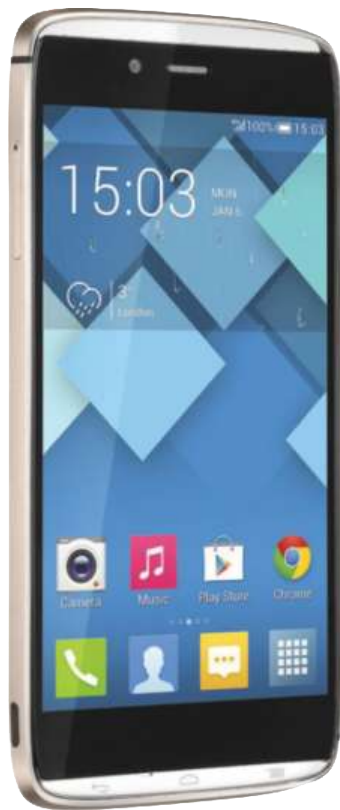
OS Android 4.3 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 123 x 64.4 x 9.9mm
Weight 130g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: Cheap, sure, but its poor quality renders its 4G capability near pointless.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Alcatel One Touch Idol Alpha

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £319

www.alcatelonetouch.com/uk

While it's good to see manufacturers branching out from the traditional black slab design, the Idol Alpha is a reminder of why the slab works. There are just too many compromises here, and the hardware does not make amends for them. Aside from the fact that Android itself is a powerful operating system that you can tailor to your heart's content, there's very little to redeem this phone.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 138 x 66.6 x 7.5mm
Weight 117.4 g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: A decent camera is the only redeeming feature on this overpriced handset.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Alcatel One Touch Idol X+

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £TBC

www.alcatelonetouch.com/uk

We usually greet lesser-known brands with open arms, but never has one disappointed as much as Alcatel with its One Touch Idol X+. Despite decent specs, it's the handset's flaws that hog the limelight. It's outperformed by other handsets in its price bracket in just about every respect. It's hard to envisage anyone patient enough to waste their time with it.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor Octa-core 2GHz
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB or 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 140.4 x 69.1 x 7.9mm
Weight 130g
Battery 2,500 mAh

VERDICT: With such great competition the One Touch Idol X+ simply looks irrelevant.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Amazon Fire Phone

Reviewed: December 2014, price: £400

When we first learned of the 3D capabilities of the Amazon Fire Phone we thought it might be a gimmick. Instead, it turned out to be the feature we love the most. Its other interface aspects are riddled with hiccups which can add to some severe usability issues. Its design has some questionable choices, too. It has a lot of potential though, and we're eagerly looking forward to a sequel.

OS Android KitKat 4.4
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.7-inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 64GB
Camera 13MP front-facing,

2.1MP rear-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 139.2 x 66.5 x 8.9mm
Weight 160g
Battery 2,400 mAh

VERDICT: A promising yet flawed debut effort, recommendable only to the curious.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Apple iPhone 5c

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £469 (16GB) £549 (32GB)

If you need a splash of colour in your life and you're already a massive fan of the iOS operating system, then the iPhone 5c is much the same as the previous iPhone 5. There's a slightly upgraded front-facing camera and 4G will work on any UK network, but other than that you're getting the exact same thing. The iPhone 5c is simply around for those of you who love great design without breaking the bank.

OS iOS 7
Processor Dual-core 1.3GHz
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 640 x 1136 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16/32GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing

Video 1080
Connectivity 4G
Size 12.4 x 59.2 x 9mm
Weight 132g
Battery 1,510 mAh

VERDICT: It's the most colourful iPhone to date, but it's identical to the iPhone 5.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Apple iPhone 5s

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £549 (16GB) £629 (32GB) £709 (64GB)

With fingerprint identity, a 64-bit A7 chip and delivering up to twice the performance of the iPhone 4 and 5c, many people will opt to pay the extra £80 or so over the 5c. They'll also get an improved camera with 15 per cent larger sensor and improved low-light capabilities. The True Tone flash incorporates two flashes each matched to different light temperatures so flesh tones are more natural with flash pictures.

OS iOS 7
Processor Dual-core 1.3GHz ARM V8
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 1136 x 640 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16/32/64GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing

1.2MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 123.8 x 58.6 x 7.6mm
Weight 112g
Battery 1,560 mAh

VERDICT: The gold standard in user-friendly smartphones, with a ton of power to boot.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Apple iPhone 6

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £539
www.apple.com/uk/iphone

Calling it 'the best iPhone ever' almost seems a little redundant. Of course it's better – it's more powerful, has a better camera, and NFC could soon become a huge deal. We're not quite as keen on the aesthetics of it versus older iPhone designs, but it's still got a wonderful premium build and a beautifully sharp display. The option for greatly expanded storage sizes shouldn't be undervalued, either.

OS iOS8
Processor Apple A8 1.4GHz
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 1334 x 750 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16/64/128GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 8MP iSight rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 138.1 x 67 x 6.9mm
Weight 129g
Battery 1,810 mAh

VERDICT: Bigger and better than ever, just as you'd expect. The definitive iPhone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Apple iPhone 6 Plus

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £619
www.apple.com/uk/iphone

It's the iPhone 6, but bigger. That's the only difference, and it comes with all of the ups and downs that you would expect from a phablet. You'll either love or hate the larger screen which, while still beautiful, is slightly less sharp than its little brother's. Similarly it might be tough for smaller hands to hold. But then you do get to see more things on screen at once. It's still a remarkable phone though, make no mistake.

OS iOS8
Processor Apple A8 1.4GHz
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB/64GB/128GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 8MP iSight rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 158.1 x 77.8 x 7.1mm
Weight 172g
Battery 1,810 mAh

VERDICT: A bigger iPhone 6 – it's really that simple. Prefer it or not, it's great regardless.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Apple iPhone 6s

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £539
www.apple.com/uk/iphone

The iPhone 6s may not offer that much to warrant an immediate upgrade but it still has enough new features to welcome new adopters to the platform. Force Touch genuinely works well and has plenty of future potential, while the hardware and low-light camera improvements make this more than just a simple cash cow.

OS iOS 9
Processor 1.84 GHz Dual Core Apple A9
Screen 4.7-inches
Resolution 1334 x 750 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16/64/128GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 12MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing

Video 4K at 30FPS
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 138 x 67 x 7.1 mm
Weight 143g
Battery 1,712 mAh

VERDICT: Plenty of new features make this another sure-fire hit for Apple.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Archos 50 Helium

Reviewed: July 2014, price: £199
archos.com

If the Moto G and Moto E are the gold standard of entry-level and low-cost smartphones, then the 50 Helium is certainly worthy of silver. It's got a nice big screen as well as invaluable 4G capability. It won't set the world alight, but it's a standout in a market awash with cheap, limited handsets.

OS Android 4.3 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G LTE

Dimensions 145 x 71.5 x 8.95mm
Weight 160g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: A capable alternative to the market-leading Moto G.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





BlackBerry Classic

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £330

uk.blackberry.com

BlackBerry diehards will love the modern touchscreen and keyboard – and even some actual apps, just like a proper smartphone. There are certainly worse handsets you could be issued at work. But there's nothing here to tempt an iPhone, Android or Windows user. For almost everyone other than BlackBerry fans, this phone is just a reminder of how far we've moved on in recent years.

OS BlackBerry OS 10.3.1
Processor Dual-core 1.5GHz Krait
Screen 3.5 inches
Resolution 720 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing

Video 1080p @ 30fps
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 131 x 72.4 x 10.2mm
Weight 177g
Battery 2,515 mAh

VERDICT: Difficult to recommend to all but the most ardent of BlackBerry fans.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



BlackBerry Passport

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £530

uk.blackberry.com

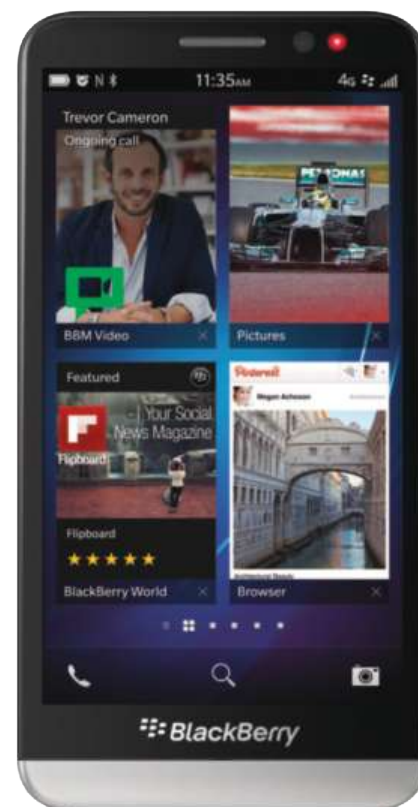
A premium device by anyone's standards – if you can look past the thoroughly odd design. Undeniably BlackBerry's most advanced device ever, it's still clearly angled towards the business crowd with a focus on productivity. The same old BlackBerry problems persist though, with an inferior OS and app store. It's just too impractical and limited for personal use.

OS BlackBerry 10.3
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 1440 x 1440 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 128 x 90.3 x 9.3mm
Weight 194g
Battery 3,450 mAh

VERDICT: Premium build and top specs are betrayed by off-putting, strange design.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



BlackBerry Z30

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £500

uk.blackberry.com

Perhaps if BlackBerry had focused on its efforts on making a phone like this five years ago we would be looking at a very different picture now. As it stands, a barren app store, odd features and a monster price tag may kill what could have been a competitive device. It's still surprisingly easy on the eye though, and its display doesn't look too bad either.

OS BlackBerry 10
Processor 1.7GHz dual-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 140.7 x 72 x 9.4
Weight 170g
Battery 2,880 mAh

VERDICT: Possibly the best BlackBerry yet, but that's not saying an awful lot.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





BWC Stealth V2

Reviewed: August 2014, price: £300
www.bwcdevices.com

With good specs available at low prices there's never been a better time to pick up a rugged smartphone (if that's what you need). The Stealth V2 lives up to both the 'rugged' and 'smart' tags, with surprisingly capable insides. It also passed all of our stress tests, with countless drops, bashes and drownings failing to leave so much as a mark.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean	Connectivity 3G
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core	Dimensions 133 x 69 x 20mm
Screen 4 inches	Weight 230g
Resolution 854 x 480 pixels	Battery 2,800 mAh
Memory 1GB RAM	
Storage 1GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing	
Video 720p	

VERDICT: As smart and tough as it promises.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



CAT B100

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £380
www.catphones.com

The CAT B100 withstands harsh conditions and jarring blows with a tough outer shell that absorbs the impact of falls, and impressive waterproofing. Beyond that, the phone lacks features games and apps – but chances are that's not why you're buying this phone. If you need a rugged handset to take adventuring, though, it's more than tough enough.

OS Nucleus 2.1	Connectivity 3G
Processor 1GHz dual-core	Dimensions 122.94 x 55.88 x 7.6mm
Screen 2.2 inches	Weight 136g
Resolution 240 x 320 pixels	Battery 1,150 mAh
Memory 512MB RAM	
Storage 50MB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 3MP rear-facing, QVGA front-facing	
Video QVGA	

VERDICT: Tough enough to take into a warzone, if a little light on actual function.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Doro 820 Mini

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £169
www.doro.co.uk

The Doro 820 Mini's software is simple to use; first-time smartphone users and the elderly won't get confused by any cumbersome on-screen options. Unfortunately, this usability has been hampered by hardware problems. A slow processor creates annoying delays when navigating through the phone, while a poor build quality ruins what could have otherwise been a decent budget phone.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean	Connectivity 3G
Processor 1GHz dual-core	Size 125 x 69.5 x 14.95mm
Screen 4 inches	Weight 170g
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels	Battery 2,000 mAh
Memory 512MB RAM	
Storage 4GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 5MP rear-facing, QVGA front-facing	
Video 720p	

VERDICT: A rugged phone for those who need to rely on it in any environment.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





Doro Liberto 820

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £186

www.doro.co.uk

It's easy to dismiss Doro phones as obsolete. This is to ignore that Doro isn't interested in attracting phone geeks and techno-fashionistas. These phones are for those value simplicity above processing power. Doro targets the 'senior' market. But with its SOS button and useful short cuts the Liberto 820 will appeal to those are not slaves to trends in consumer electronics.

OS Android 4.4 Kit Kat with Doro Wizard	Connectivity 3G
Processor 1.3Ghz quad-core	Dimensions 13mm x 71mm
Screen 5.5 inches	Weight 132g
Resolution 940 x 560	Battery 1,900 mAh
Memory 1GB	
Storage 4GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 8MP	
Video 720p	

VERDICT: A surprisingly well-featured phone for the more tech-savvy of seniors.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Doro PhoneEasy 624

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £100

www.doro.co.uk

The PhoneEasy 624 is Doro's best feature phone offering for those who want to keep things as simple, while making sure important contacts are only a button push away. It's got a 3G antenna, lengthy battery life, but a needlessly dire camera.

OS Custom	Dimensions 102 x 52 x 19mm
Processor N/A	Weight 104g
Screen 2.4 inches	Battery 800 mAh
Resolution 320 x 240 pixels	
Memory N/A	
Storage N/A	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 2MP	
Video 720p	
Connectivity 3G	

VERDICT: A well featured phone for the price if you're in the market for that sort of thing.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



EE Kestrel

Reviewed: September 2014, price: £99

www.doro.co.uk

The EE Kestrel is the best entry-level 4G handset on the market and this is in no small part due to Huawei. The manufacturer has built a solid handset that consumers will use beyond its 4G-LTE capability. Although, its weak resolution is a major flaw, it has plenty of other positive attributes including a smooth UI, the ability to handle a vast range of games and decent web and app browsing speeds.

OS Android 4.3 (Jelly Bean)	Connectivity 4G, 3G
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core	Dimensions 131 x 65.3 x 7.85mm
Screen 4.5 inches	Weight 145g
Resolution 540 x 960 pixels	Battery 2,000 mAh
Memory 1GB RAM	
Storage 8GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing	
Video 1080p	

VERDICT: A reliable handset that boasts good usability, if underwhelming specs.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





Google Nexus 6

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £499

www.google.com/nexus/6/

The Nexus 6 is a reminder of exactly what so many manufacturers are doing wrong by overly modifying Android. Google's flagship is a tremendous powerhouse – more of a media hub than a mere smartphone, and one of the best phablets on the market. Whether you'd rather it had a stylus is a matter of preference, though.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor 2.7 GHz quad-core
Screen 5.96 inches
Resolution 2560 x 1440 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32/64GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 4K

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 82.98mm x 159.26mm x 10.06mm
Weight 184g
Battery 3,220 mAh

VERDICT: Fast, fresh and tremendously powerful. A dream for Android purists.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Honor 7

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £250

www.hihonor.com/en/pages/products/honor7

The Honor 7 is a solid handset that has the looks and appeal to captivate many buyers. It's got a great screen and impressive camera that has a few unique features up its sleeve. Unfortunately, it also suffers from mixed performance that seems to be a result of the Kirin chipset. If you're a keen mobile gamer, this could be an issue.

OS Android Lollipop v5.0
Processor Kirin 935 (8 cores: 2.2 GHz quad core + 1.5 GHz quad-core)
Screen 5.2-inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 3GB
Storage 16GB/ 64GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB

Camera 20MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 143 x 72 x 8.5 mm
Weight 157g
Battery 3,100mAh

VERDICT: Great looks and impressive camera but performance could be an issue.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



HTC Desire 626

Reviewed: October 2015, price: £150

www.htc.com/uk

The HTC Desire 626 is a solid handset that performs fine in most areas. Should you decide to purchase one, it will likely serve you very well under most conditions. The only problem arises from the £150 retail price, which puts it squarely in the firing line of budget superstars such as the Vodafone Smart Ultra 6. Had HTC priced it slightly cheaper, it may well have been worth more serious consideration.

OS Android 5.1
Processor 1.2 GHz quad-core Snapdragon 410
Screen 5.0-inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 512GB
Camera 13MP rear-facing,

5MP front-facing
Video 1,080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 147 x 71 x 8.2 mm
Weight 135g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: There are better deals out there. Still, this is a perfectly capable phone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





HTC Desire 816

Reviewed: October 2014, price: £300

www.htc.com/uk

In a market lacking a viable midrange phablet the HTC Desire 816 stands out. It might have its flaws, but for the price you can certainly look past them. If you can't, then a midrange device probably isn't for you. For the rest of us, there's no better option for getting your hands on a jumbo screen on the cheap.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.6GHz quad-core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1.5GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 156.6 x 78.7 x 7.9mm
Weight 165g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: A triumphant, large addition to a fantastic 2014 product line for HTC.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



HTC Desire 820

Reviewed: June 2015, price: £299

www.htc.com/uk

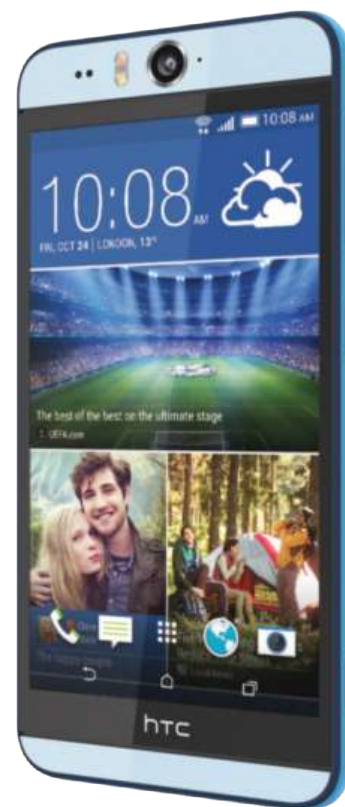
A large display, fantastic cameras and attractive design makes the HTC Desire 820 an ideal choice if you're after an affordable phone with plenty of features. It's only been let down by the fact that it doesn't pack an HD screen and that it doesn't run the latest Android software. It's also quite pricey compared to the OnePlus One; a phone that is a serious rival.

OS Android 4.4.2 KitKat
Processor Quad-core 1.5 GHz Cortex-A53
Screen 5.5-inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing

Video 1080p at 30fps
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 157.7 x 78.7 x 7.7mm
Weight 155g
Battery 2600 mAh

VERDICT: Cheap, attractive and packed full of features.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



HTC Desire Eye

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £365

www.htc.com/uk

While we love the cameras (having a front-facer as highly powered as the rear-facer is a huge boon, particularly for selfie-lovers) the Desire Eye's build quality and price make it a tougher sell than you might think. It does look nice though, and is an interesting concept. Just not a 100% successful one.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 2.3 GHz quad-core
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 13MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 151.7 x 73.8 x 8.5mm
Weight 154g
Battery 2,400 mAh

VERDICT: A hard sell when the superior One M8 can now be bought for the same price.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





HTC One M8

Reviewed: May 2014, price: £530

www.htc.com/uk

The HTC One M8 is, in all probability, the best smartphone ever made. It both looks and performs better than almost everything else out there. Features like Blinkfeed and knock-to-wake are a joy to use. If Apple, Sony and Samsung weren't paying attention before, they certainly are now.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat	Connectivity 4G
Processor 2.3GHz quad-core	Dimensions 146.36 x 70.6 x 9.35mm
Screen 5 inches	Weight 160g
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels	Battery 2,600 mAh
Memory 2GB RAM	
Storage 16GB or 32GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 4MP UltraPixel rear-facing, 5MP front-facing	
Video 1080p	

VERDICT: If you can afford it, buy it. There's no better Android handset on the market.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



HTC One M9

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £580

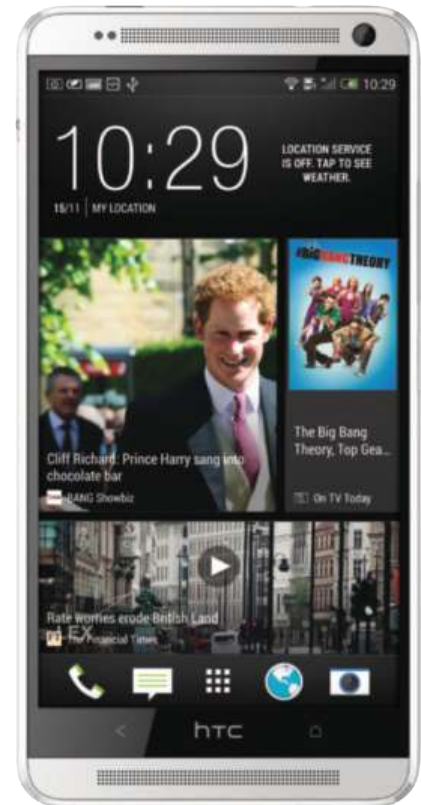
www.htc.com/uk

The One M9 is HTC's first major release of 2015 and its top-notch build quality, powerful processor and phenomenal battery life makes it one of our favourite phones of this year. However, it doesn't really provide anything different to what flagship rivals like the iPhone 6 already offers. Despite that, the HTC One M9 is still one of the best looking and most powerful phones on the market.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop	Video 4k
Processor 4 x 2GHz + 4 x 1.5GHz octa-core	Connectivity 4G
Screen 5 inches	Dimensions 144.6 x 69.7 x 9.61mm
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels	Weight 157g
Memory 3GB RAM	Battery 2,840 mAh
Storage 32GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 4MP UltraPixel front-facing	

VERDICT: It has no unique selling point but it's still one of the best devices out there.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



HTC One Max

Reviewed: January 2014, price: £599

www.htc.com/uk

The HTC One Max piggybacks the reputation of the HTC One, although nothing much has improved. The high-quality display is present but HTC has failed to add processing power and the fingerprint sensor implementation is very disappointing.

OS Android 4.3 Jelly Bean	Video 1080p
Processor 1.7GHz quad-core	Connectivity 4G
Screen 5.9 inches	Dimensions 164.5 x 82.5 x 10.3mm
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels	Weight 217g
Memory 2GB	Battery 3,300 mAh
Storage 16GB or 32GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 4MP UltraPixel rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing	

VERDICT: The HTC One's design is still a standout but there's nothing new here.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





HTC One Mini 2

Reviewed: August 2014, price: £360

www.htc.com/uk

Your opinion of the One Mini 2 will come down to what you mostly use your phone for. If you don't put too much strain on its struggling processor then you should be fine. It's got a magnificent pair of cameras, and that trademark HTC metal unibody build can't be beat. Day-to-day users will be more than satisfied – hardcore tech-heads should stick with the One M8.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1,280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 137.4 x 64 x 10.6mm
Weight 137g
Battery 2,110 mAh

VERDICT: Powered to match its stature, but still a very polished, attractive device.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Huawei Ascend G7

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £205

www.huaweidevice.co.uk

With a large screen and the gorgeous looks that remind us of the iPhone 6; the Huawei Ascend G7 might look good on the outside but the software is another story. Huawei has redesigned Google's vanilla Android operating system and reskinned it as something that looks both cheap and ugly. Despite that, the Ascend G7 is a decent choice if you want an iPhone 6-lookalike that runs Android software.

OS Android 4.4.2 KitKat
Processor 1.2 GHz quad-core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 153.5 x 77.3 x 7.6mm
Weight 165g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: Its great performance is ruined by a cheap and ugly looking operating system.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Huawei Ascend P7

Reviewed: July 2014, price: £365

www.huaweidevice.co.uk

The Ascend P7 feels like a missed opportunity. Huawei should have put its full weight into creating a top-level flagship handset. However, its underpowered processor is its only real flaw. It looks premium and its front-facing camera is the best on the market. Its price could be a sticking point, but it's by no means a bad device.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.8GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 139.8 x 68.8 x 6.5mm
Weight 124g
Battery 2,500 mAh

VERDICT: It's not quite a market-leading flagship but at least it looks the part.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Huawei P8

Reviewed: August 2015, price: £395
www.huaweidevice.co.uk

An attractive device that gives you top-of-the-range specs and a fantastic camera for half the price of the Samsung Galaxy S6 or iPhone. The performance isn't as slick as its major rivals, but that isn't a deal breaker. Especially when the phone costs half the price of the iPhone 6 and Samsung Galaxy S6.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor 2 GHz quad-core
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 16/64GB
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 144 x 72 x 6.4mm
Weight 144g
Battery 2,680 mAh

VERDICT: Flagship specs for half the price of a Galaxy S6 or iPhone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Huawei Honor 4x

Reviewed: August 2015, price: £144.99
www.huaweidevice.co.uk

An affordable phone that offers solid battery life and plenty of features. The build quality even feels better than the LG G4, a smartphone that costs double its recommended retail price. Honor isn't a big name over in the West, but phones like the 4X are helping it head in that direction. It's just a shame that the processor is a little on the weak side.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor HiSilicon Kirin 620
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 153 x 77 x 8.7mm
Weight 165g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: A solid phone at a bargain price, you'll be surprised at how good it looks.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Huawei Honor 6+

Reviewed: July 2015, price: £299.99
www.huaweidevice.co.uk

If you're after an affordable device with plenty of top-notch features, you can't really go wrong with the Huawei Honor 6+. The camera is unique, the performance is fantastic and battery life is better than more expensive phones. Its slow camera and inability to handle certain apps are only minor negatives – the Honor 6+ is well worth the money.

OS Android KitKat 4.4.2
Processor Kirin octo-core 925
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
Camera Dual 8MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 151 x 76 x 7.5mm
Weight 165g
Battery 3,600 mAh

VERDICT: A flagship phone with excellent battery life that doesn't break the bank.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Kazam Tornado 348

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £247

www.kazam.mobi

Despite great looks and smooth performance, lack of 4G connectivity and storage makes the Tornado 348 something of a non-starter for serious users. The casual market will be plenty content with what's on offer here – particularly those eye-catching physical dimensions.

OS Android KitKat 4.4	Connectivity 3G
Processor 1.7Ghz octa-core	Dimensions 139.8 x 67.5 x 5.15mm
Screen 4.8 inches	Weight 95.5g
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels	Battery 2,050 mAh
Memory 1GB RAM	
Storage 16GB	
MicroSD compatible? No	
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing	
Video 720p	

VERDICT: Standout design and performance at an attractive price.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Kazam Thunder Q4.5

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £TBC

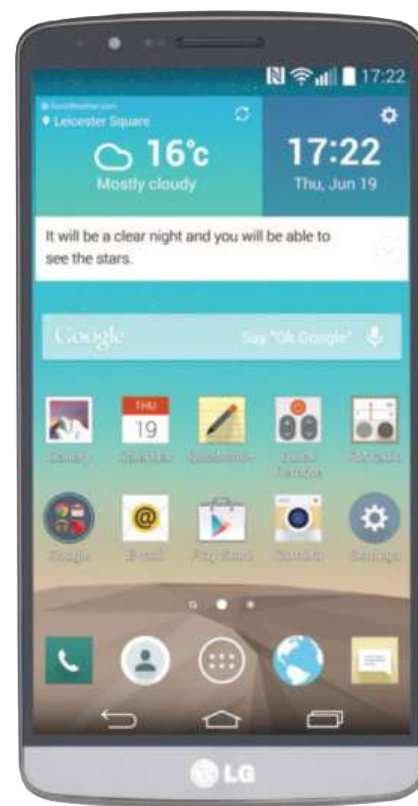
www.kazam.mobi

The Thunder Q4.5 is a sure case of style over substance, but in the lower-cost end of the market you'd usually be lucky to get either. While the phone lacks standout features it won't let you down when it comes to everyday smartphone functionality. If you're in the market and want to try something new, you could certainly do an awful lot worse.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean	Connectivity 3G
Processor 1.3Ghz quad-core	Dimensions 136 x 64.6 x 8.9mm
Screen 4.5 inches	Weight 137g
Resolution 854 x 480 pixels	Battery 1,800 mAh
Memory 1GB RAM	
Storage 1.74GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing	
Video 720p	

VERDICT: It may be flawed, but at this price point you'd be hard pushed to beat it.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



LG G3

Reviewed: August 2014, price: £499

www.lg.com/uk

Only minor detractors stop the LG G3 from being the perfect smartphone. That said, there's no such thing as the perfect smartphone just yet, so the G3 is still a wonderful piece of kit. It has outstanding features, hardware, and form to boot. The best display around, a monstrous processor and a variety of little touches all make the G3 a special smartphone.

OS Android 4.4 (KitKat)	Connectivity 4G
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core	Dimensions 146.3 x 74.6 x 8.9mm
Screen 5.5 inches	Weight 149g
Resolution 1440 x 2560 pixels	Battery 3,000 mAh
Memory 2GB RAM	
Storage 16GB or 32GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing	
Video 2160p	

VERDICT: Want the best? The G3 is absolutely deserving of your consideration.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





LG G4

Reviewed: July 2015, price: £500
www.lg.com/uk

The unique leather design and incredible camera certainly helps the LG G4 stand out against rivals like the iPhone 6. However, the fact it doesn't have the strongest processor on the market, alongside an average battery and awkward button placement, means it doesn't really stand up as a true iPhone and Galaxy smasher.

OS Android 5.1 Lollipop
Processor 1.4GHz quad core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 2560 x 1440 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
Camera 16MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 149 x 76 x 9.8mm
Weight 155g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: A monster device let down by a weak processor. Not a Galaxy S6 killer.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



LG G4c

Reviewed: October 2015, price: £229
www.lg.com/uk

The LG G4c is solidly average, with a few fun gimmicks that don't quite make up for the photo quality. For those who simply want a day-to-day workhorse, it is not a bad option, but it's not for those who are looking for something heavy-duty.

OS Android
Processor Quad-core 1.3 GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon
Screen 5.0 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280-pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 8MP rear-facing,

5MP front-facing
Video 1,080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 139.7 x 69.9 x 10.2 mm
Weight 139g
Battery 2,540 mAh

VERDICT: Solidly average for everyday use, but not for heavy-duty users.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



LG G Flex

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £570
www.lg.com/uk

The curved display may add very little, but with a state-of-the-art spec sheet and a fantastic display, the LG G Flex nails the basics of a high-end smartphone. However the £570 price and so-so camera make it difficult to recommend – at least when compared to its cheaper, better rivals. The Flex just isn't the innovation LG believes it to be.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 6 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 160.5 x 81.6 x 7.9mm
Weight 177g
Battery 3,500 mAh

VERDICT: A powerful phone held back by a steep price for an unnecessary gimmick.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





LG Spirit 4G

Reviewed: August 2015, price: £129.99
www.lg.com/uk

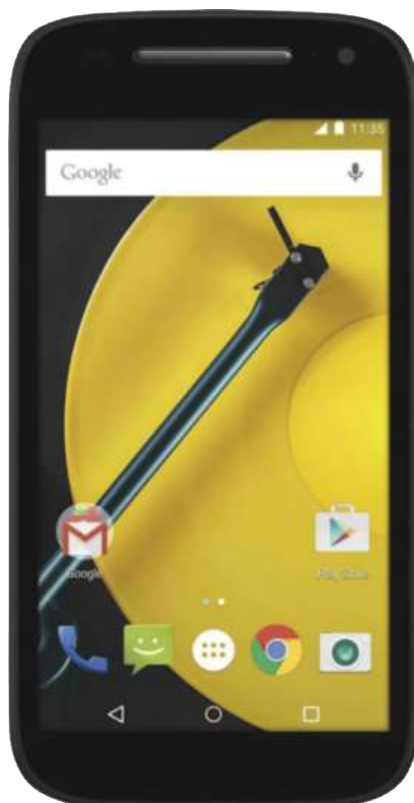
At only £129.99, there's little to criticise in this budget mid-range device that looks a lot like a shrunk down LG G4. It has enough performance for most users and comes with Android 5.0 right out of the box. The only problem is the weak front and rear cameras, which distract from an otherwise competent package.

OS Android 5.1 Lollipop
Processor 1.3 Ghz quad-core
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 133x66x10mm
Weight 124g
Battery 2,100 mAh

VERDICT: A competent mid-range device with Android Lollipop and good specs.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Motorola Moto E (2015)

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £109
www.motorola.co.uk

Paying £109 for a full-blown, powerful 4G smartphone is seriously good value for money. This value is only increased by a high-quality camera, powerful processor and excellent battery life. The only major faults we found when testing the phone included no LED camera flash, a plastic body that easily picks up marks and a fiddly SIM-card slot.

OS Android 5.0.2 Lollipop
Processor Qualcomm Snapdragon 410, 1.2 GHz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 540 X 960 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing,

640 x 480 front-facing
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 129.9 x 66.8mm, 146g
Weight 145g
Battery 2,390 mAh

VERDICT: After a smartphone that's seriously good value? This is for you.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Motorola Moto G (1st Gen)

Reviewed: January 2014, price: £135
www.motorola.co.uk

The Moto G is a budget smartphone done right. It makes smart and sensible sacrifices to slash its price to a point that puts its rivals to shame. For people who don't demand the highest specs and best camera from a phone, the Moto G's easy-to-use system and fast speeds make it an ideal choice.

OS Android 4.3 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB/16GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 129.9 x 65.9 x 11.6mm
Weight 143g
Battery 2,070 mAh

VERDICT: The best option for customers on a budget.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Motorola Moto G (2nd Gen)

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £150

www.motorola.co.uk

It's an updated version of the Moto G – nothing more, nothing less. The lack of 4G is extremely disappointing, and a processor upgrade would have been nice. Still, a bigger screen, a better camera and MicroSD compatibility is extremely welcome. When it comes to affordable phones that can actually perform, the Moto G is still untouchable.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB/16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 32GB
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 720p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 141.5 x 70.7 x 11mm
Weight 149g
Battery 2,070 mAh

VERDICT: A solid improvement on the best, but no 4G gives it a limited shelf life.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Motorola Moto G 4G (2nd Gen)

Reviewed: June 2015, price: £150

www.motorola.co.uk

One of the best value smartphones on the market, the large display, 4G connectivity and latest Android operating software makes it well worth the price. Combine all of this with the phone's fantastic build quality and the Motorola Moto G 4G is well worth keeping after your contract expires.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor Quad-core 1.2 GHz Cortex-A53
Screen 5.0-inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8/16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 720p at 30fps
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 141.5 x 70.7 x 11mm
Weight 155g
Battery 2390 mAh

VERDICT: Priced between £200-£400, this smartphone undermines the competition.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Motorola Moto G (3rd Gen)

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £159

www.motorola.co.uk

Motorola has done it again with another device that punches above its weight and mostly improves on its predecessor. Every area is catered for here, offering impressive battery life, a brilliant camera and adequate performance. If you're looking for a solid Android device that won't break the bank, the Moto G is worth consideration.

OS Android Lollipop v5.1.1
Processor 1.4 GHz Snapdragon 410
Screen 5.0-inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM (8GB), 2GB RAM (16GB)
Storage 8/16GB
MicroSD compatible?
Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 142 x 72 x 11.6 mm
Weight 155g
Battery 2,470mAh

VERDICT: Solid device that offers perfectly fine performance across the board.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Motorola Moto X (2nd Gen)

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £380
www.motorola.co.uk

A rock-solid handset with helpful features. This is the best place to experience Google Now, making voice operation genuinely useful. Mix in a sleek design, great camera and long battery life and the £380 price tag is justified. If you can afford the extra £150 then it makes for a sterling upper-mid tier upgrade to the Motorola Moto G.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat	Connectivity 4G
Processor 1.7GHz dual-core	Dimensions 129.3 x 65.3 x 10.4mm
Screen 4.7 inches	Weight 130g
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels	Battery 2,200 mAh
Memory 2GB RAM	
Storage 16/32GB	
MicroSD compatible? No	
Camera 10MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing	
Video 1080p	

VERDICT: For those looking to step up from the budget tier: your search is over.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Motorola Moto X (2014) (1st Gen)

Reviewed: January 2015, price: £420
www.motorola.co.uk

Motorola's original Moto X was a nice idea executed a little too late. Competition from superior phones from manufacturers with a stronger recent track record was too great to overcome. But this latest version makes a much stronger case for your cash. It's got some excellent features and will surely be beloved by fans of stock Android.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat	Connectivity 4G
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core	Dimensions 140.8 x 72.4 x 10mm
Screen 5.2 inches	Weight 144g
Resolution 1,080 x 1,920 pixels	Battery 2,300 mAh
Memory 2GB RAM	
Storage 16/32GB	
MicroSD compatible? No	
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing	
Video 2160p	

VERDICT: The best Motorola ever, and arguably the best Android handset of 2014.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Nokia Asha 503

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £70
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

Nokia's Asha 503 is a brilliantly tiny handset that stays usable despite the smaller screen. If you want a dirt-cheap phone then you might be better off with a sub-£50 handset and its design is a little spiky. But anyone looking for a phone to keep them busy for five minutes on a bus will find plenty to love here.

OS Nokia Asha platform 1.2	Dimensions 102.6 x 60.6 x 12.7mm
Processor N/A	Weight 110.2g
Screen 3 inches	Battery 1,200 mAh
Resolution 240 x 320 pixels	
Memory 128MB RAM	
Storage 4GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 5MP rear-facing	
Video QVGA	
Connectivity 3G	

VERDICT: A good entry into the budget market that offers more than the basics.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





Nokia Lumia 435

Reviewed: September 2015, price: £40
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

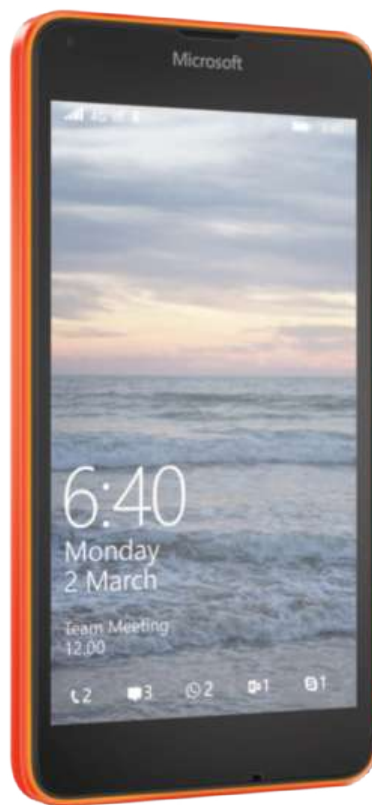
It won't shake the world but for 40 quid you can hardly expect it to. This is a very cheap phone that has all the features you would expect from more expensive handsets. While it doesn't excel in any particular area and the camera is pretty terrible, you'll be lucky if you find anything that performs this well for the price. A genuine bargain.

OS Windows Phone 8.1
Processor 1.2GHz dual-core
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 800 x 480
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Cameras 2MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 480p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 118 x 65 x 11.7mm
Weight 131g
Battery 1,560 mAh

VERDICT: A bargain-bin handset that still manages to run Windows Phone very well.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 640

Reviewed: August 2015, price: £109.99
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

It's incredible what Microsoft has managed to cram into such a cheap, inconspicuous phone. It has nailed all the major points internally, with a great camera, excellent battery and an adequate processor for the well-optimised Windows Phone OS. The only problem is Windows Phone itself, which still struggles to convince the sceptics.

OS Windows Phone 8.1 GDR2
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 141 x 72 x 8.8mm
Weight 145g
Battery 2,500 mAh

VERDICT: A brilliant battery and solid performance make this a bargain device.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 640 XL

Reviewed: September 2015, price: £180
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

Although it is more expensive than the 640, you get the advantage of a much bigger screen and some seriously good battery life. The camera has also gotten a bump too, producing some excellent images for this price-point. It's just a shame that the processor hasn't been improved to complement them.

OS Windows Phone 8.1 GDR2
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5.7 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 157.9 x 81.5 x 9mm
Weight 171g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: Not a huge leap up but the camera and battery are worth the money.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Nokia Lumia 735

Reviewed: December 2014, price: £299
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

Microsoft has produced a genuine rival to the bestselling Motorola Moto G in the form of the Lumia 735. With the introduction of an HD display and 4G LTE this is much more than just another selfie phone. But if selfies are what you're after the Lumia 735 offers plenty of fun ways to snap images of you and your friends with its 5-megapixel front camera.

OS Windows Phone 8.1
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 1,280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 6.7MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 134.7 x 68.5 x 8.9mm
Weight 134g
Battery 2,200 mAh

VERDICT: A Windows Phone to match the Moto G, the 735 is a selfie star.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 830

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £267
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

The Nokia Lumia 830 is not quite the swansong we were hoping for. It's not hugely affordable, and nor does the phone's hardware make full use of that 4G connectivity. Mid-range mobiles seldom convince us of their reason to exist and this final Nokia is no exception. It does look the part, and Cortana is improving, but there are simply better options out there.

OS Windows Phone 8.1
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 10MP rear-facing, 0.9MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 139.4 x 70.7 x 8.5mm
Weight 150g
Battery 2,200 mAh

VERDICT: Underpowered and overpriced, the Lumia 830 is average and forgettable.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 925

Reviewed: August 2013, price: £479
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

With the Lumia 925 Nokia hasn't set out to reinvent the wheel, it has just built on its past achievements to put together a brilliant phone. A gorgeous slimmed-down design, high performance camera and responsive user interface all set this handset apart from the rest of the Lumia range and make it a top level device in the high-end smartphone market. One of the best out there.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 1.5GHz dual-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 760
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16/32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 129 x 70.6 x 8.5mm
Weight 139g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: A fantastic camera, slick design and great user interface make this top dog.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Nokia Lumia 930

Reviewed: September 2014, price: £420
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

The plus side for those looking for something different is that Windows Phone has come along enough now that its mere presence on a handset isn't enough to relegate it completely. The Lumia 930 is the flagship that the range has been crying out for for far too long now, and if you don't mind having a relatively restricted ecosystem then you should have very few issues with it.

OS Windows Phone 8.1
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 20MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 137 x 71 x 9.8mm
Weight 167g
Battery 2,420 mAh

VERDICT: The closest to rivalling Android and iOS that Windows Phone has ever come.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 1020

Reviewed: November 2013, price: £639.99
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

The Lumia 1020 is an ideal smartphone for those of you who don't care about apps and it's perfect if you love to take great pictures. It might not be the slimmest device you can get your hands on but the 1020's powerful camera is well worth the extra bulk.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 1.5GHz dual-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 760
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 41MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 130.4 x 71.4 x 10.4mm
Weight 158g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: A top smartphone with an astounding camera – one of the best.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 1320

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £280
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

The Lumia 925 and 1020 were large enough, and the lack of software taking advantage of the big display, unlike with the Samsung Galaxy Note, means those extra inches just leave you looking faintly ridiculous when answering a call. You're better off spending your money on an Android phablet or Google's Nexus 5.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 1.7GHz dual-core
Screen 6 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G-LTE
Dimensions 164.2 x 85.9 x 9.8mm
Weight 220g
Battery 3,400 mAh

VERDICT: A good phone but the Nexus 5 simply undercuts the competition too well.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Nokia Lumia 1520

Reviewed: February 2014, **price:** £550
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

Although the Nokia Lumia 1520 weighs in at a whopping £550 (SIM-free), it could cost you considerably more to purchase a standalone camera, camcorder, satnav, tablet and a laptop computer that can run Microsoft Office.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 6 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 20MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G-LTE
Dimensions 162.8 x 85.4 x 8.7mm
Weight 209g
Battery 3,200 mAh

VERDICT: A great all-in-one device that mashes the best of Nokia together.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



OnePlus One

Reviewed: June 2015, **price:** £269
www.oneplus.net

If you're not bothered about Samsung, Apple or any of the other big brand names, then we highly recommend the OnePlus One. It offers class-leading specs for half the price of an iPhone 6 or Samsung Galaxy S6. That attractive price is topped off by excellent build quality and unlimited customisation options.

OS Cyanogenmod version of Android 4.4
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 801
Screen 5.5 inches Gorilla Glass 3
Resolution 1920 x 1080
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 64GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes

Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Connectivity 4G, dual-band wi-fi, Bluetooth 4.0, NFC, GOS antenna
Video 1080 HD
Dimensions 152.9 x 75.9 x 8.9mm
Weight 162g
Battery 3100 mAh

VERDICT: A top-spec smartphone for half the price of the iPhone 6? Yes please!

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



OnePlus Two

Reviewed: November 2015, **price:** £289
www.oneplus.net

With only its second device ever, OnePlus has knocked it out of the park with the OnePlus 2. It has improved a lot on the OnePlus One with the seemingly endless battery life, souped-up specs and, of course, the incredible price.

OS Lollipop v5.1
Processor Quad-core 1.56 GHz and 1.82, Snapdragon 810
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels (401 ppi pixel density)
Memory 4GB RAM
Storage 64GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing,

5MP front-facing
Video 2160p@30fps, 720p@120fps
Connectivity 3G & 4G
Dimensions 151.8 x 74.9 x 9.9 mm
Weight 175 g
Battery Non-removable 3300 mAh

VERDICT: A phone so affordable for the specs on offer it would be foolish to pass up.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Panasonic Lumix DMC-CMq

Reviewed: October 2015, price: £799
www.panasonic.com/uk/consumer

This is by no means a cheap device but you most definitely get what you pay for. Considering when it first released, the Panasonic DMC-CM1 had flagship specifications and a true camera sensor to match even the best compact/bridge cameras. Fast forward to now and little has changed; this is still the best camera phone you can get and by quite some distance

OS Android KitKat 4.4.2 (upgradable to 5.0)
Processor 2.3 GHz Snapdragon 801
Screen 4.7-inches
Resolution 1,920 x 1,080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes,
 up to 128GB
Camera 20MP rear-facing, 1.1MP front-facing
Video 2160p (15fps only)
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 135.4 x 68 x 21.1 mm
Weight 204g
Battery 2,600mAh

VERDICT: If you've got the wallet and pocket space for it, you'll be blown away.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Prestigio MultiPhone 5430

Reviewed: November 2013, price: £190
www.prestigio.com

The Prestigio MultiPhone 5430 is a bland piece of kit that lacks any real highlights, but is undoubtedly a capable and efficient smartphone. Perhaps its best feature is that it gets the core experience right, if not groundbreakingly so. The very basics of what you expect from a smartphone in 2013 are here but there isn't much else.

OS Android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich
Processor Intel Atom 1.2GHz
Screen 4.3 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 0.3MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 126 x 64.7 x 10mm
Weight 140g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: Perfectly ordinary – but it's positioned as an everyday smartphone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy A7

Reviewed: July 2015, price: £319.99
www.samsung.com/uk

The Samsung Galaxy A7 is an attractive proposition. But looks aren't everything. The cheaper £269 OnePlus One offers more power, a similar screen size and up-to-date software. And the £129 Vodafone Smart 4 Max with a bigger screen is less than half the price. If it's about power, not just looking powerful, perhaps look elsewhere.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.5GHz Quad-core
Screen 5.5-inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Camera 13MP
Video Yes
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 151 x 76.2 x 6.3mm
Weight 141g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: An attractive device but it has less power than similar devices.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Samsung Galaxy Ace 3

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £180

www.samsung.com/uk

The Samsung Galaxy Ace 3 is a good handset that's been made irrelevant by cheaper competition. While it packs a vibrant display and solid specs, similar phones sit well below the £180 benchmark set here. Samsung will have to rethink its pricing. If it weren't for the Moto G's release this would be an emphatic recommendation – unfortunately Samsung will have to settle for the silver medal.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean	Connectivity 4G LTE
Processor 1.2GHz dual-core	Dimensions 121.2 x 62.7 x 9.8mm
Screen 4 inches	Weight 115g
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels	Battery 1,500 mAh
Memory 1GB RAM	
Storage 8GB/16GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing	
Video 720p	

VERDICT: Premium build quality and visuals at a good price – just not a great one.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy K Zoom

Reviewed: October 2014, price: £400

www.samsung.com/uk

We can see what Samsung set out to achieve with the Galaxy K zoom, and creating a solid Android smartphone with an optical zoom is no small feat. However, it looks like a dated digital camera at best – newer devices are much more compact. If you're after a smartphone with a solid snapper, we'd advise you to seek out the LG G3 or Sony Xperia Z2 instead.

OS Android 4.4 (KitKat)	Video 1080p
Processor Hexa-core: 1.3GHz quad-core + 1.7GHz dual-core	Connectivity 4G
Screen 4.8 inches	Dimensions 137.5 x 70.8 x 16.6mm
Resolution 1,280 x 720 pixels	Weight 200g
Memory 2GB RAM	Battery 2,430 mAh
Storage 8GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing	

VERDICT: A decent smartphone and an excellent camera in a hideous body.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Note 3

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £649

www.samsung.com/uk

The Note 3 steps over the competition with its large, engulfing display and great battery life, but it's the stylus that's the star of the show here, with great integration that makes it an ideal note-keeping device. This makes it ideal for business people on the move, although they'll have to make sure they keep an eye on the easy-to-lose pen at all times.

OS Android 4.3 Jelly Bean	Dimensions 151.2 x 79.2 x 8.3mm
Processor 2.3GHz quad-core	Weight 168g
Screen 5.7 inches	Battery 3,200 mAh
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels	
Memory 3GB RAM	
Storage 16/32/64GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 13MP front-facing, 2MP rear-facing	
Video 4K	

VERDICT: A fantastic portable business device with helpful, unique features.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





Samsung Galaxy Note 4

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £498
www.samsung.com/uk

This year's effort ensures the Note remains top of the phablet pile, but unless you're particularly taken with the stylus and split-screen app combo, you shouldn't discount the latest flagship phones. The LG G3 and new Motorola Moto X are stunning devices, only slightly smaller in size and power. Unless you've got a thing for faux leather, that is, in which case the Note 4 is the best gadget ever made.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat	Video 2160p at 30fps
Processor 2.7GHz quad-core	Connectivity 4G
Screen 5.7 inches	Dimensions 153.5 x 78.6 x 8.5mm
Resolution 1,440 x 2,560-pixels	Weight 176g
Memory 3GB RAM	Battery 3,220 mAh
Storage 32GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 16MP rear-facing, 3.7MP front-facing	

VERDICT: Still king of the phablets, but not by such a distance this time around.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Note Edge

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £610
www.samsung.com/uk

The Samsung Galaxy Note Edge points to an exciting future when we no longer have to accept that a smartphone screen has to be rectangular. As is often the case with a new technology, though, it needs more work. As cool as the edge looks, it serves little purpose, other than to make this a more expensive Note 4. Call us when the screen wraps all the way around, Samsung.

OS Android 4.4.4 KitKat	3.7MP front-facing
Processor Quad-core	Video 4K @ 60fps
Screen 5.6-inches	Connectivity 4G
Resolution 1,600 x 2,560 pixels	Dimensions 151.3 x 82.4 x 8.3mm
Memory 3GB RAM	Weight 174g
Storage 32/64GB	Battery 3,000 mAh
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 16MP rear-facing,	

VERDICT: A worthwhile endeavour – for Samsung's engineers, not the consumer.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy S3 Mini

Reviewed: January 2013, price: £300
www.samsung.com/uk

Something of a misnomer, this is no relation to its bigger brother, the S III, despite the design similarities. The Mini is little more than a shrunk down Galaxy S II. If users want a budget Galaxy, they are better off pursuing that (former) flagship on a budget plan – this is extortionately expensive for what you get.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean	Connectivity 3G
Processor 1GHz dual-core	Dimensions: 121.6 x 63 x 9.9mm
Screen 4 inches	Weight 111.5g
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels	Battery 1,500 mAh
Memory 1GHz RAM	
Storage 8/16GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 0.3MP front-facing	
Video 720p	

VERDICT: A cheeky move by Samsung to pass this off as a premium device. It's not.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





Samsung Galaxy S4

Reviewed: July 2012, price: £550

www.samsung.com/uk

An impressive hardware offering with intriguing new software and camera features but these need to be perfected and integrated into the device as a whole before the S4 can really be called a knock out. While the phone's processor seemed to struggle with games and the design is pretty similar to the S3, this is a solid offering from Samsung in the flagship race.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
CPU 1.6 GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 16/32/64GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Cameras 13MP front-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 136.6 x 69.8 x 7.9mm
Weight 130g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: An impressive offering with interesting but not integrated new software.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy S4 Active

Reviewed: November 2013, price: £400

www.samsung.com/uk

The Active S4 is ideal for people looking for a more protected smartphone, although it does make some sacrifices. Its design is too rugged for mainstream appeal and its display and camera aren't great. But it's a great hybrid for an underwater camera and is perfect for adventurous lifestyles.

OS Android 4.2.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.9 GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 139.7 x 71.3 x 9.1mm
Weight 151g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: It may not be quite as good as its big brother, but it certainly has its purpose.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy S5

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £530

www.samsung.com/uk

The thing about Galaxy handsets is that their flaws are often matters of personal opinion. If you don't mind the samey design, plasticky build and irksome user interface, then the Galaxy S5 could be the best smartphone going. It's insanely powerful, has a blinding display and is even waterproof. If you care about substance over style then the Galaxy S5 is as good as it gets.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core
Screen 5.1 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16/32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 16MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 142mm x 72.5mm x 8.1mm
Weight 145g
Battery 2,800 mAh

VERDICT: Behind a cheap-looking build lies the beastliest smartphone around.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Samsung Galaxy S6 edge

Reviewed: June 2015, price: £760

www.samsung.com/uk

This is currently one of the best looking smartphones on the market. That dual-curved screen makes the iPhone 6 Plus and HTC One M9 look boring in comparison. An insanely fast camera and superb performance means that the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge isn't just about looks either.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor octa-core Samsung Exynos 7420
Screen 5.1-inches
Resolution 1,440 x 2,560
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 64GB/128GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 16MP rear-facing 5MP front-facing

Video 4K
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 142.11 x 70.1 x 7mm
Weight 132g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: A phone that grabs attention with both its looks and performance.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia Z1

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £475

www.sonymobile.com

It's a little on the large side, but Sony's latest handset is rock solid, with powerful hardware and a unique design. Fans of the company will be right at home with the software that stores movies, music and games you've bought across other platforms. Add in a great camera and you've got a phone that stops just short of best in class.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor Snapdragon 800 quad-core 2.2GHz
Screen 1080 x 1920 pixels, 5 inches
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB expandable up to 64GB via MicroSD
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Wireless Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0
Ports MicroSD, microUSB
Battery 3000 mAh
Dimensions 144 x 74 x 8.5mm
Weight 170g

VERDICT: Software makes it great for Sony fans, hardware makes it good for the rest

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia Z1 Compact

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £449

www.sonymobile.com

If you hate giant displays and don't have the patience for Apple's iOS and its restrictive App Store, the Sony Xperia Z1 Compact is your only choice, and a great one at that. Sony has done well to make a phone with the power to rival the mighty iPhone in an equally small package. In-built Sony-branded apps such as Walkman and PlayStation is an inherent plus, too. Fingers crossed for a KitKat 4.4 upgrade soon.

OS Android 4.3
Processor Qualcomm Snapdragon 800
Screen 4.3-inch HD Triluminos
Resolution 720 x 1,280 pixels
Memory 2GB
Storage 16GB, expandable to 64GB

Camera 20.7MP Exmor RS
Video 720p
Connectivity Wi-Fi, 3G, 4G, Bluetooth 4.0, NFC
Dimensions 127 x 64.9 x 9.5mm
Weight 137g
Battery 2,300 mAh

VERDICT: The most powerful, best looking compact Android available. Simple.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





WHAT MOBILE
EDITOR'S CHOICE
★★★★★



WHAT MOBILE
EDITOR'S CHOICE
★★★★★

Sony Xperia Z2

Reviewed: July 2014, price: £579

www.sonymobile.com

The Z2 matches its rivals' power and usability. A lack of design innovation and similar specs might deter Z1 owners from upgrading, though, and the large size might not appeal to fans of smaller devices. That said, superior imaging and a powerful processor and CPU means it excels in the right places.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 2.3GHz quad-core
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 146.8 x 73.3 x 8.2mm
Weight 163g
Battery 3,200 mAh

VERDICT: An immaculate smartphone, if only a small step up from its predecessor.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia Z3

Reviewed: December 2014, price: £549

www.sonymobile.com

We were all a little bit surprised when Sony elected to release a new flagship a matter of months after the Xperia Z2 hit shelves. After reviewing it though, the company's reasoning is obvious. The Z3 is a true flagship as worthy of your attention (and cash) as any other in this Buyer's Guide. The Z3 has premium design, hugely powerful internals and an array of neat features. A very impressive device.

OS Android 4.4 Kit Kat
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1,920 x 1,080 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing

Video 4K
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 146 x 72 x 7.3mm
Weight 152g
Battery 3,100 mAh

VERDICT: Sony's best full-sized offering yet, although the camera is aging a little now.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia Z3 Compact

Reviewed: December 14, price: £429

www.sonymobile.com

The Xperia Z3 Compact is indisputably the most powerful compact Android ever made. We can't really slight it for anything, and no other Android phone in its size bracket can come close to matching it. It's remarkable that Sony has managed to squeeze almost the exact same technology from the Z3 into a smaller body. Finally, Android power-users have a valid option in the sub-five inch display category.

OS Android 4.4 Kit Kat
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core
Screen 4.6 inches
Resolution 1,280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing

Video 4K
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 127 x 64.9 x 8.6mm
Weight 129g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: The definitive small-sized Android smartphone. The most powerful yet.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★





Vodafone Smart 4 Max

Reviewed: July 2015, price: £129.99
www.vodafone.co.uk

If you crave a 6-inch 4G phablet for the equivalent of £2.50 a week over a year the Smart 4 Max is the only game in town. Purists will sneer at its elderly processor, low-res screen and lack of 'Lollipop'. You'll be the one with around £400 more in your bank account. Just bear in mind it can only connect to Vodafone 4G network and you can't remove the Vodafone embedded software.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor Snapdragon MSM8926
Screen 6-inches
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 13MP
Video Yes
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 164 x 83.4 x 7.9mm

Weight 170g
Battery 3,800 mAh

VERDICT: A great price makes this worthwhile for first-time buyers.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Vodafone Smart 4 Power

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £79
www.vodafone.co.uk

The benchmark scores of a £79 phone were never going to impress anyone: the Smart 4 Power is not a handset for playing the latest taxing games on. That said, it's enough to deliver on the advantages of 4G. If instant information rather than instant gratification is what you're after, this phone delivers for the price.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.3GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 141 x 71.4 x 9.5mm
Weight 162g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: Poor specs distract from what is an ergonomic and capable 4G starter.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Vodafone Smart Ultra 6

Reviewed: September 2015, price: £125
www.vodafone.co.uk

Packing a fast processor, excellent screen and plenty of battery life, you'll be hard-pressed to find a rival phone which offers quite this much for the money. Even the camera is pretty good, offering full manual controls and a high megapixel count. If you're after a true bargain Android device and are happy to forgo the big brands, this is well worth a look.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor 1.5GHz quad-core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p 30fps

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 154 x 77 x 8.4mm
Weight 159g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: Excellent specs and great battery life make this seriously good value.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Wileyfox Swift

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £129

www.wileyfox.com

A good budget handset that struggles to stand out from the crowd, the Wileyfox Swift faces stiff competition from the likes of Motorola. Punch-for-punch, it has features to match similar handsets but the difficulty of being an entirely new brand will make it hard to claw loyal fans away from other devices.

OS Android (Cyanogen 12.1)	Connectivity Dual-SIM, 4G
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core	Dimensions 141.15mm x 71mm x 9.37mm
Screen 5.0 inches	Weight 135g
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels	Battery 2,500 mAh
Memory 2GB RAM	
Storage 16GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 13MP rear-facing	
Video 1080p at 30fps	

VERDICT: A solid performer that can't quite make itself stand out from the rest.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



YeZZ Andy A5

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £207

www.sayyezz.com

Camera phone fans on a tight budget should definitely seek out the Andy A5 for its affordable price and high-quality camera. If taking photos is not that important to you then you'll probably have seen the uninspired design and bland features a million times before.

OS Android 4.2 (Jelly Bean)	Weight 106g
Processor Quad-core 1.2GHz	Battery 2,000 mAh
Screen 5 inches	
Resolution 540 x 960 pixels	
Memory 512MB RAM	
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing	
Connectivity 3G, wi-fi	
Dimensions 144.1 x 73.5 x 8.6mm	

VERDICT: A great camera but the rest struggles against more bullish counterparts.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



YotaPhone 2

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £549

www.yotaphone.com/gb-en/

The YotaPhone 2 fixes almost all of the original's flaws, and turns the rear E Ink display from an impractical cherry on top, to one of the phone's main ingredients. There's no denying this quirky conversation-starter is for a niche audience, and a rich one at that. We can't wait to see what the YotaPhone 3 will bring – not least a price drop for this model.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat	2.1MP front-facing
Processor Quad-core 2.3GHz Krait 400	Video 1080p
Screen 5 inches	Connectivity 4G
Resolution 1,080 x 1,920 pixels	Dimensions 144 x 69.5 x 8.9mm
Memory 2GB RAM	Weight 145g
Storage 32GB	Battery 2,500 mAh
MicroSD compatible? No	
Camera 8MP rear-facing,	

VERDICT: If you're constantly reading on the go this is the best new smartphone in years.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





ZTE Blade Vec 4G

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £153
www.ztedevices.co.uk

Once you've fixed all the software customisations present on the Vec 4G, you're left with a pretty respectable performer for the price. The large, sharp display does a great job of quickly rendering web pages over 4G. Unfortunately, the Vec 4G battery's small capacity and demanding hardware mean you'll often find the phone emptied by the end of the day. It also has storage issues – namely no SD card slot.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat	Connectivity 4G
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core	Dimensions 142.3 x 70.4 x 7.8mm
Screen 5 inches	Weight 155g
Resolution 720 x 1280	Battery 2,300 mAh
Memory 1GB RAM	
Storage 16GB	
MicroSD compatible? No	
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing	
Video 1080p	

VERDICT: Solid specs for 4G at a reasonable price, but there are better options out there.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



ZTE Blade V

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £99.99
www.ztedevices.co.uk

A fantastic price makes the ZTE Blade V easy to recommend for first-time buyers. Anyone hoping to get the most out of a smartphone's apps and snaps should look elsewhere, but if you don't want to worry about a phone for the kids being broken or stolen, then this is for you.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean	Weight 130g
Processor Snapdragon S4 Play	Battery 1,800 mAh
Screen 480 x 800, 4 inches	
Memory 1GB RAM	
Storage 4GB	
Camera 5MP	
Video Yes	
Connectivity 3G	
Dimensions 126 x 64 x 10.9mm	

VERDICT: A great prices makes this worthwhile for first-time buyers.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



ZTE Blade S6

Reviewed: August 2015 price: £169.99
www.ztedevices.co.uk

The ZTE Blade S6 is definitely more than just a cheap iPhone 6 rip off. A decent camera helps it stand out from the rest of the mid-range crowd, while performance is surprisingly decent for a phone of this price. It's let down by poor build quality and software that lacks certain features. The price is the most attractive, however, and those negatives shouldn't put you off this decent mid-range phone.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop	Battery 2,400 mAh
Processor Snapdragon 615	
Screen 5-inches	
Memory 2GB RAM	
Storage 16GB	
Camera 13MP	
Video Yes	
Connectivity 4G	
Dimensions 144 x 70.7 x 7.7mm	
Weight 154g	

VERDICT: An affordable phone with surprisingly decent performance.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





Amazon Kindle Fire HD 8.9"

Reviewed: May 2013, price: £229/259

www.amazon.co.uk

A good looking e-reader with tablet capabilities, limited by Amazon's annoying operating system and app eco-system, and an annoyingly slow browser. This device will doubtless be a commercial success, with its branding and ease of use, but for the more serious user there are much better tablets out there.

Dimensions 240 x 164 x 8.8mm
OS Customized Android 4.0
Screen 8.9 inch IPS LCD capacitive touchscreen
Resolution 1920 x 1200, 254 ppi
Processor TI OMAP 4470 dual-core 1.5 GHz Cortex-A9
GPU PowerVR SGX544
RAM 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB/32GB
Cameras front facing 1.3MP with 720p video
Wireless 802.11 a/b/g/n, dual-band
Ports USB 2.0, 3.5mm audio jacks, Bluetooth A2DP
Battery life 10 hours (accurate)

VERDICT: A solid, functional tablet that is limited by its Amazon associations.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Acer Iconia Tab 8

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £140

www.amazon.co.uk

Acer has managed to do what manufacturers of every cheap tablet should aspire to: create a tablet that is priced extremely competitively, but which performs to a standard much higher than you'd expect for its cost. A few compromises have been made along the way, but this is still a budget slab that's well worth considering.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.3GHz quad-core
Screen 8 inches
Resolution 1,280 x 800 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB/32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 32GB
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 720p
Connectivity Wi-fi only
Dimensions 215 x 130 x 8.5mm
Weight 360g
Battery 4,600 mAh

VERDICT: It has a few flaws, but for less than £150 you should look past them.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Advent Vega Tegra Note 7

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £140

www.nvidia.co.uk

It's a contender, alright. Aside from some clunky desing issues, the Advent Vega Tegra Note 7 is a powerful and punchy little machine. If you're after a compact and affordable tablet its speed sets it aside from its rivals as a device that's great for gaming, customising images and browsing the web.

OS Android Jelly Bean 4.3
Processor Nvidia Tegra 4
Screen 7 inches
Resolution 1,280 x 800 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Connectivity Wi-fi, Bluetooth 4.0
Dimensions 119 x 199 x 9.6mm
Weight 320g
Battery 8 hours

VERDICT: Its speed sets it apart from its competition. A cheap and capable device.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Amazon Kindle Fire HDX

Reviewed: January 2014, price: £199-329
www.amazon.co.uk/kindle

The Kindle Fire HDX is around £100 more than the Fire but the improved screen and processor justifies the extra cost. The real human Help feature will be a boon to tablet newbies; experienced users will regard it as a gimmick. The HDX is a top-rate device – but if you're not a regular Amazon customer you're better off with a Nexus.

OS Amazon customised Android OS, v4.1.2
Screen 1902 x 1200 pixels, 7 inches
Processor Snapdragon 800 2.2GHz quad-core
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16/ 32/64GB versions available
Camera 8MP front-facing
Video 720HD
Wireless Wi-fi (optional Vodafone 4G version)
Ports microUSB
Dimensions 131.8 x 66.9 x 9.9mm
Weight 302g

VERDICT: A significant update to the Fire and ideal for Amazon users.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Apple iPad Mini

Reviewed: December 2012, price: £269
www.apple.com/uk

The iPad Mini represents Apple playing it safe, which is to say: disappointing. This is little more than an iPad 2, with all its limitations – a low-res screen and weak processor power – shrunk down to an odd 7.9-inch size. It is also overpriced, the Google Nexus 7 offers superior performance for £100 less. Despite its luxurious design, you really are paying for little more than 4G support and Apple's App Store. Average.

OS iOS 6.0.1
Screen 7.9-inch LED-backlit IPS LCD
Resolution 768 x 1024 pixels at 162 pixels per inch
Input Capacitive touchscreen
CPU Apple A5 1GHz dual core
GPU PowerVR SGX543MP2
Memory 512MB
Storage 16/32/64GB
Camera 5MP rear facing, 1.2MP front facing
Video 1920x1080 (1080P HD) at 30fps. Video stabilised
Wireless Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/n, dual-band, Bluetooth 4.0
Ports 3.5mm audio jack, Apple Lightning port (USB 2.0)
Size 200 x 134.7 x 7.2mm
Weight 308g

VERDICT: Little more than a shrunk iPad 2 with 4G. Disappointing.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Apple iPad 3

Reviewed: April 2012, price: £399
www.apple.com/uk

The new iPad boasts the highest-resolution display of any tablet, as well as an improved 5MP camera and better connectivity. Not to mention a high-powered new processor which makes it the most powerful iPad ever, too. Though some may resist the upgrade path, the unrivalled Retina display is a subtle but deeply appealing feature that will become more and more desirable. The new iPad is by far the best tablet around

OS iOS 5
Screen 9.7-inch TFT
Resolution 1536 x 2048 pixels
Input Capacitive touchscreen
Processor 1GHz Cortex-A9
Memory 1GB
Storage 16/32/64GB
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 0.3MP front-facing
Flash No
Video 1080p HD
Wireless 802.11a/b/g/n Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0
Ports 3.5mm audio jack, proprietary Apple connector
Standby time 720 hours
Use time 9 hours
Size 241 x 186 x 9mm
Weight 662g

VERDICT: There's simply no contest – the new iPad is the best tablet in the world.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Apple iPad 4

Reviewed: January 2013, price: £399

www.apple.com/uk

A rather cheeky move by Apple to release the iPad 4 (or 'iPad with Retina Display') just months after the iPad 3. All it really adds is a new processor (the iPhone 5's A6X) and Apple's new lightning connector. However, this means it remains as the best tablet money can buy – and Apple's App Store and its 300,000 dedicated tablet apps only make the proposition more enticing.

OS iOS 6.0.1,
Screen 9.7 inch LED
Resolution 1536 x 2048 pixels at 264 ppi pixel density
CPU Apple A6X, Dual-core
GPU PowerVR SGX554MP4,
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16/32/64GB storage
Camera 5MP rear facing, 1.2MP front facing
Video 1080P HD at 30fps
Wireless Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/n, Bluetooth 4.0
Cellular 4G, 3G, 2G
Ports Lightning Connector (USB2.0) and 3.5mm audio jack,
Dimensions 241.2 x 185.7 x 9.4mm
Weight 662 g

VERDICT: The best tablet money can buy.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Archos 79 Platinum

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £150

www.archos.com

With so many budget tablets to choose from the Archos 79 Platinum has no features or unique selling points to attract the consumer in a saturated market. Its hardware is woefully underpowered, its features are bog standard and it is at least £10 too expensive. Its attractive looks are not enough to redeem it. The bottom line is that it should have never been conceived.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor Quad-core A9 1.6GHz
Screen 7.85 inches
Resolution 1024 x 768 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 2MP rear-facing
Connectivity Wi-fi, Bluetooth
Dimensions 201 x 137 x 8mm
Weight 366g
Battery Lithium Polymer

VERDICT: There is no reason you ever would, or should, buy it. Avoid, avoid, avoid.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Archos 101 XS 2

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £250

www.archos.com

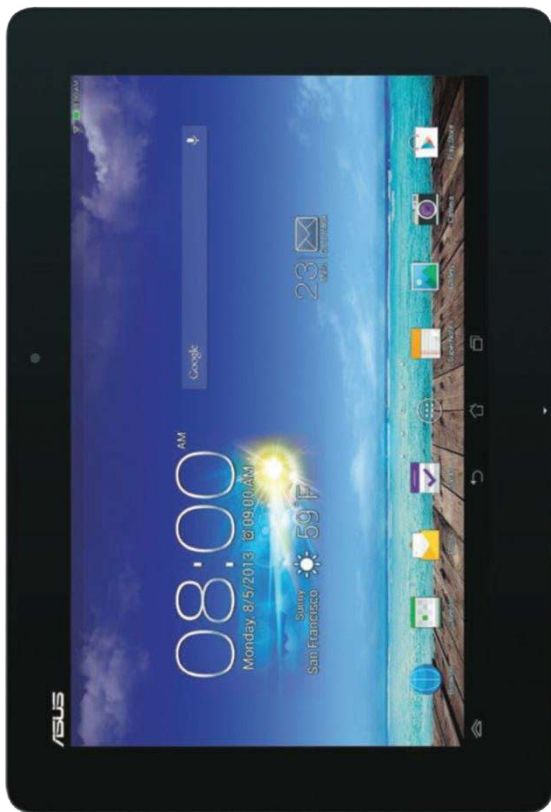
A couple of years ago, the 101 XS would have had us singing Archos' praises, but by today's standards its processing power and screen quality fall short. It might, though, find a home with users limited to spending £250 on a 10-inch tablet

OS Android 4.2.2
Screen 10.1-inch/1,280 x 800 pixels
Camera 2MP rear, 2MP front
Video Record/playback
Audio Music player/3.5mm jack
Memory 16GB expandable via MicroSD
Dimensions 273 x 169 x 10.1mm (tablet), 273 x 169 x 5mm (keyboard)
Weight 636g (tablet), 200g (keyboard)

VERDICT: A great price is let down by a poor screen and cheap build.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★





Asus Transformer Pad TF701T

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £429
www.asus.com

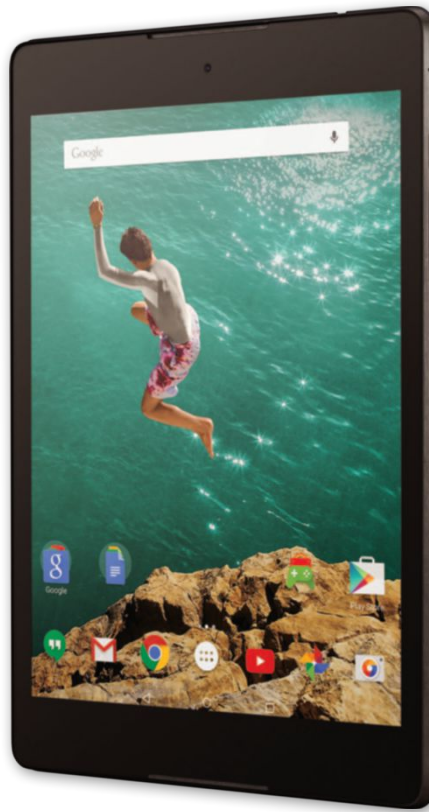
The Asus Transformer Pad TF701T packs a beautiful screen and the keyboard dock is well thought out. But dated software and the threat of a Google Nexus 10 sequel make this a niche device. Do you really need a keyboard? The iPad mini begs to differ.

OS Android 4.3 (via an over-the-air update)
Screen 10.1 inch/2,560 x 1,600 pixels
Input Capacitive touchscreen
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing
Video Record/playback
Audio Music player/3.5mm jack

Memory 32/64GB
Battery Tablet 31Wh, dock 16Wh

VERDICT: It packs fast hardware but can't compete with the iPad Air or Nexus range

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Google Nexus 9

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £319
www.google.co.uk/nexus

The Google Nexus 9 is an impressive and welcome return to the tablet market for HTC, and a jewel of a gadget for Android 5.0 to debut on. The size is right, and if you know for sure you want an Android tablet, it's your best bet – it's certainly the best slate HTC has ever made – but for the money we'd still go for the quality build and thriving eco-system of an iPad.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Screen 8.9-inch
Resolution 2048 x 1536 pixels
Processor Tegra K1 2.3GHz
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB/32GB internal
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.6MP front-facing
Flash No
Video 1080p HD

Dimensions 153.68mm x 228.25mm x 7.95mm
Weight 425g
Battery 6,700 mAh

VERDICT: The best tablet on the market – if you insist on Android, that is.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Google Nexus 10

Reviewed: February 2013, price: £319
www.google.co.uk/nexus

Finally, the Android tablet everyone's been waiting for – except Apple. This is a tablet that can go head to head with the best in the Apple iPad stable – it has a powerful processor, a Retina Display quality screen, the latest version of Android. Along with the Nexus 7, this is the best tablet Android users can buy. The only flaws are an uninspired body, and a dearth of tablet specific apps.

OS Android 4.2 (Jelly Bean)
Dimensions 263.9 x 177.6 x 8.9mm, 603g
Screen 10 inch
Resolution 2560 x 1600 pixels
Input Super PLS TFT capacitive touch-screen
CPU Exynos 5, Dual-core ARM Cortex-A15
RAM 2GB

Cameras 5MP (main), 1.9MP (front)
Wireless Wi-Fi, Bluetooth
NFC Android Beam
Storage 16GB/32GB
Connectivity Micro USB, Micro HDMI, 3.5mm headphone jack
Battery 9,000 mAh

VERDICT: The best Android tablet of 2013 slips behind the iPad only due to apps.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





HP Slate 7

Reviewed: October 2013, price: £125

www.hp.com

The steel frame makes the Slate 7 an impressive sight and its audio uses Beats technology to great effect. The fantastic price will help it to undercut some of its rivals, though the slow processor and low quality camera keep it from besting them elsewhere.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean
Processor Dual-core 1.6 GHz Cortex-A9
Screen 600 x 1024 pixels, 7.0 inches
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB expandable to 32GB via SD card
Camera 3.15MP pixel rear-facing, VGA front-facing

Video 720p
Dimensions 197.1 x 116.1 x 10.7mm
Weight 372 g
Battery non-removable, 5h media time

VERDICT: Great audio and build, but corners have been cut to keep costs down.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Lenovo ThinkPad 8

Reviewed: September 2014, price: £424

www.lenovo.com

If you just want a device for general tasks then you can find better alternatives within Lenovo's Yoga range of Android slates, and elsewhere. If you're a fan of Windows and in search of a bulkier device that offers plenty of productivity tools, then the ThinkPad is an (almost) viable option.

OS Windows 8.1
Processor 2.4GHz quad-core
Screen 8.3 inches
Resolution 1200 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 8.83 x 5.2 x 0.35 inches
Weight 439g

VERDICT: Even with so few Windows tablets available the ThinkPad still fails to stand out.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Lenovo Miix 2

Reviewed: July 2014, price: £255

www.microsoft.com/surface

With solid performance across the board, frequently usable built-in apps and compact size the Miix 2 is a small but surprisingly versatile slate. Despite the limitations that come with the Windows OS, it performs general tasks well and, for the price, won't let you down. With 3G capability you can even connect to the internet on the move. Overall, it offers plenty of pleasant surprises to combat the weaknesses of its OS.

OS Windows 8.1
Processor 1.3GHz quad-core
Screen 8 inches
Resolution 1280 x 800 pixels
Memory 2GB
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 8.3 x 215.6 x 131mm
Weight 350g
Battery 4,730 mAh

VERDICT: A small but substantial Windows offering that still trails its Android rivals.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Lenovo Yoga Tablet 2

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £249
www.lenovo.com

Lenovo certainly deserves credit for trying to break the 'black slab' mould. It's an interesting attempt at something different, but unless you have a real need to hang it up from the ceiling or to perch it upright on a train table every day its mediocre internals and display don't represent that much value for money.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.86GHz quad-core
Screen 10.1inches
Resolution 1920 x 1200 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 64GB
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.6MP front-facing
Video 720p
Connectivity 4G optional
Dimensions 255 x 183 x 7.2mm
Weight 619g
Battery 9,600 mAh

VERDICT: A nice idea, but one we don't fully buy into. Not quite up to scratch.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Microsoft Surface 2 Pro

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £720
www.microsoft.com/surface

We can't fault Microsoft's ambition for the powerful Surface Pro 2 to become your all-in-one portable work and play device. It's got a great display and solid hardware but a lack of dedicated apps, software compromises and stiff – cheaper – competition make it a tough sell.

OS Windows 8.1
Screen 10.6 inches/1920 x 1080 pixels
Input Capacitive touchscreen
Camera 720p resolution front and rear
Video Record/playback
Audio Music player/3.5mm jack
Memory 64GB/128GB/
 256GB/512GB
Battery 48Wh

VERDICT: Price holds back what is an otherwise excellent work/play hybrid.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Microsoft Surface Pro 3

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £640
www.microsoft.com/surface

From software to hardware and even design, the Surface Pro 3 is a wonderful piece of kit. It's refreshing to come across a tablet with grander ideals than the norm, challenging us to rethink the notion of the medium. For most people this could genuinely replace their laptop. It's just a shame, and an almost inexcusable mistake, that the keyboard which is so integral to its function is sold as an expensive extra.

OS Windows 8.1
Processor 1.5GHz Intel core i3/2.9GHz Intel core i5/3.7GHz Intel core i7
Screen 12 inches
Resolution 2160 x 1440 pixels
Memory 4/8GB RAM
Storage 64GB/128GB/256GB/512GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity Wi-fi only
Dimensions 292.1mm x 201.4mm x 9.1mm
Weight 800g
Battery 42Wh

VERDICT: The first tablet with enough function to conceivably replace a laptop.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Nokia Lumia 2520

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £399

www.nokia.com

The Windows-run Lumia 2520 is a decent first effort from Nokia – and it's certainly one of the more attractive and solid pieces of tablet hardware on the market. It has a few issues with the weight and a lackluster camera but overall we have no trouble recommending this to Windows 8.1 and Lumia fans.

OS Windows 8.1
Screen 10.1 inches, 1920 x 1080 pixels, 218PPI
Processor Qualcomm Snapdragon 800
Memory 2GB
Camera 6.7MP with Carl Zeiss lens
Audio Music player/3.5mm jack

Dimensions 168 x 267 x 8.9mm, 615g
Battery 8120 mAh

VERDICT: A rock-solid first effort from Nokia in this market with powerful specs.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 Kids

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £250

www.nokia.com

The Tab 3 Kids is surprisingly robust, with a solid camera, great battery, fantastic educational apps and software to suit kids. But the premium design doesn't feel like it was meant to be enjoyed by young users and we'd suggest going with a company that specialises in the market rather than one that's testing it out.

OS Android 4.1
Processor Dual-core 1.2GHz
Screen 600 x 1024 pixels, 7 inches
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB/16GB, expandable up to 64GB
Camera 3.15MP (back), 1.3MP (front)
Video 720p@30fps

Wireless WiFi, Bluetooth 3.0
Ports micro-USB, MicroSD
Dimensions 188 x 111.1 x 9.9mm
Weight 306g
Battery Li-Ion 4,000 mAh

VERDICT: A little too premium for the market it is aimed at.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Tab S

Reviewed: October 2014, price: £319

www.samsung.com/uk

While the Tab S may not be a radical departure from other Android tablets, it encompasses everything that is great about a top-notch Samsung product. It's enough to rebuild the Korean giant's brand image, and proof that the company can still surprise us with a fantastic all-round product.

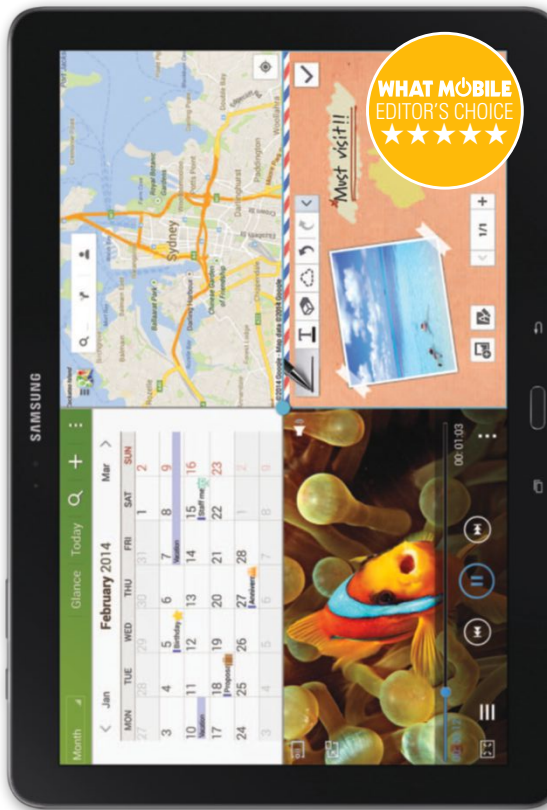
OS Android 4.4 Kit Kat
Processor 2.3GHz quad-core
Screen 8.4 inches
Resolution 2560 x 1600 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 16GB, 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 125.6 x 212.8 x 6.6mm
Weight 294g
Battery 4,900 mAh

VERDICT: Simply put, it's the best Android tablet on the market.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Samsung Galaxy Note Pro 12.2

Reviewed: May 2014, price: £649
www.samsung.com/uk

One of the biggest displays ever seen on a tablet – at no detriment to quality. Combine that with solid design and a super powerful processor to run loads of unique applications and the NotePRO 12.2 is arguably the best tablet on the market. It's certainly the best Android slate, although it's definitely priced as such.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor Octa-core (1.9GHz + 1.3GHz quad)
Screen 12.2 inches
Resolution 2560 x 1600 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB/64GB
Camera 8MP rear/2MP front-facing
Video 1,080p Full HD
Connectivity Wi-fi only
Dimensions 295.6 x 204 x 7.95mm
Weight 750g
Battery 9,500 mAh

VERDICT: Big, beautiful, functional and priced to match. Android's finest.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia Z4 Tablet

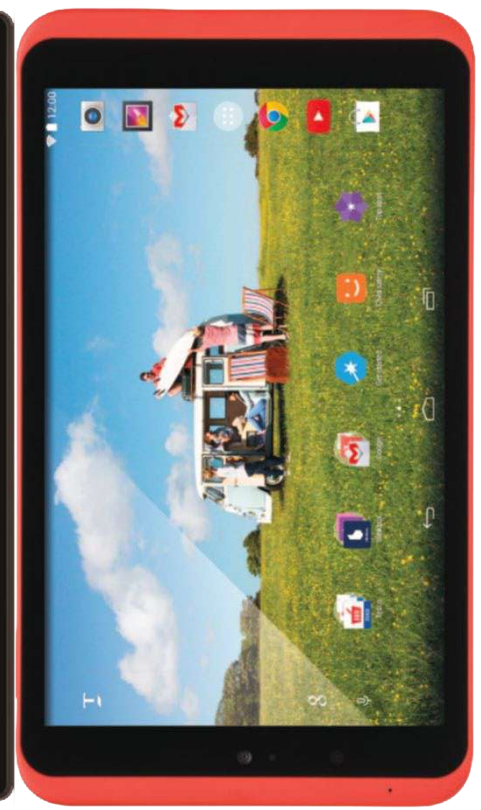
Reviewed: October 2015, price: £499
www.sony.co.uk

The Sony Xperia Z4 is a beautifully engineered tablet with more than enough power to run even the most demanding app smoothly. Unfortunately, while slimline and lightweight, its listed price of £499.00 is surprisingly high for its provided specifications. Powerful but pricey.

OS Android 5.0 (Lollipop)
Processor Octa-core 2.0 GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 810, 64 bit
Screen 10.1 inches
Resolution 2560 x 1600-pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes,
 up to 128GB
Camera 8.1MP rear-facing, 5.1MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G, Wi-Fi
Dimensions 167 x 254 x 6.1 mm
Weight 393g
Battery 6,000 mAh

VERDICT: Beautifully engineered, slimline tablet but pricey considering specification.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Tesco Hudl 2

Reviewed: January 2015, price: £129
www.tesco.com/direct/hudl

This is no Tesco Value attempt at a tablet. Make no mistake, the Hudl 2 is a fantastic Android slate that's great value for money. Sure, it's not on the cutting edge like Google's Nexus series of devices, but if all you want is a gadget to casually surf the web, watch some films or read a few comics, this device is every bit as capable as an iPad Mini.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.83GHz quad-core
Screen 8.3 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1200 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing
Video 720p at 30fps
Connectivity Wi-fi
Dimensions 224 x 128 x 9mm
Weight 410g
Battery 4,900 mAh

VERDICT: Don't be fooled – Tesco is now a serious contender in the tablet space.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Toshiba Excite Pure

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £250

www.toshiba.co.uk

The Toshiba Excite Pure's £250 price is attractive but its display is far too faded. It means apps and the like don't look very good. It might appeal to families looking for a cheap way to keep the kids entertained but little else. Even so, the slow processor and useless apps force us to recommend you look elsewhere.

OS Android v4.2 (Jelly Bean)

Processor Nvidia Tegra 3

Memory 1GB

Storage 16GB

Screen 1280 x 800 pixels, 10.1 inches

Video HD

Audio Stereo

Dimensions 261.6 x 177.8 x 10.2mm

VERDICT: It's got a cheap price tag but the poor display and tech shows why.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Vodafone Smart Tab 4G

Reviewed: June 2015, price: £125

www.vodafone.co.uk

Attractive, cheap and feature-packed; the Vodafone Smart Tab 4G looks more upmarket than its affordable £125 pricing suggests. It's let down by a slow processor, but that shouldn't put you off what is basically well-designed and ideal family tablet.

OS Android KitKat 4.4

Processor 1.2 GHz Quad-Core

Screen 8.0-inches

Resolution 1280 x 800-pixels

Memory 1GB RAM

Storage 8GB

MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 64GB

Camera 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing

Connectivity GSM/EDGE/3G/4G/HSPA+/LTE
Dimensions 209 x 128 x 7.99mm

Weight 309g

Battery 4060 mAh

VERDICT: An affordable and easy-to-use tablet that offers something for everyone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Vodafone Smart Tab 6

Reviewed: September 2015, price: £150

www.vodafone.co.uk

The Smart Tab 6 is definitely cheap but we'd suggest looking elsewhere for a good budget tablet. The screen isn't that great and performance can't quite keep up with more intensive tasks and games. It has a large battery and the build quality is definitely better than the price suggests, but these points aren't enough to redeem what is an average tablet at best.

OS Android 5.0.2 Lollipop

Processor Quad-core 1.3GHz

Screen 1280 x 800 pixels, 9.6 inches

Memory 1GB RAM

Storage 16GB, expandable up to 32GB

Camera 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing

Video 720p

Wireless WiFi, Bluetooth 4.1

Ports micro-USB, MicroSD

Dimensions 146 x 244 x 7.9mm

Weight 406g

Battery Li-Ion 4,600 mAh

VERDICT: Cheap but not quite good enough to worry the competition.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★





Asus ZenWatch

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £204

www.asus.com/uk/

The Asus ZenWatch is handsome enough, but fails to stand out from the crowd of Android Wear devices. Google's wearable OS still feels like a solution in search of a problem – unless you have a specific use in mind for its features you may want to hold out for the next generation of devices.

VERDICT: Attractive, but with too many caveats to recommend outright.



Fitbit Flex

Reviewed: August 2014, price: £79.99

www.fitbit.com

Minor niggles aside, the Fitbit Flex is possibly the best fitness wearable on the market. Its features are so diverse, and its app so beautiful and intuitive, that it can be tailored to just about anyone's lifestyle. With interchangeable bands in a variety of colours, and a low price, the Flex is practically a must-buy.

VERDICT: A fantastic companion app and great functionality put the Flex on top.



LG G Watch R

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £180.00

www.jawbone.com

The LG G Watch R may be one of the most mature-looking smartwatches yet, but not everyone will find it attractive – or appreciate Android Wear's limitations. The market's set to explode with the advent of the Apple Watch and the Pebble Time. Unless you're desperate for what the LG G Watch R does right now, it's hard to see the value in yet another second-generation Android Wear watch.

VERDICT: Although attractive, it has limited functionality compared to other smartwatches.



Nike+ Fuelband SE

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £89
www.nike.com

The Nike+ FuelBand SE is close to being the perfect sports tracker. It's social capabilities combined with its numerous features to keep you motivated ensure that it will be a permanent mainstay in any gym addicts kit bag. You might not be so keen on wearing it every single day, though, with its appealing design being more clearly tailored to a casual setting. Plus, its lack of waterproofing could be a deal-breaker for some.

VERDICT: When it comes to fitness, Nike is a name you can trust – this is no exception.



Samsung Galaxy Gear 2

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £250
www.samsung.com

The design needs a rethink but the Samsung Galaxy Gear 2 provides decent fitness tracking features and a good music player. Trimming down on other functions, however, would have made for a slimmer and sleeker product. It would be unfair to say this is a needless addition as it packs a lot of functions, but it's an expensive product that's hindered by an impractical design and redundant features.

VERDICT: A decent effort that has since been eclipsed by superior Android Wear devices.



Vector Smartwatch

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £80
www.vectorwatch.com

An ambitious attempt to inject some much-needed class into the smartwatch. It's beautiful. But the level of interactivity is minimal and its software lacking. Ultimately, we came away wondering what a Pebble Time with Vector's hardware and battery life might be like. We can only hope this becomes just that, but the company has a long road to travel first.

VERDICT: Beautiful but basic, the Vector Smartwatch is a bit of an oddity.



Wearable compatibility guide



iPhone 6 / 6 plus

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HTC One M8

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Samsung Galaxy S5

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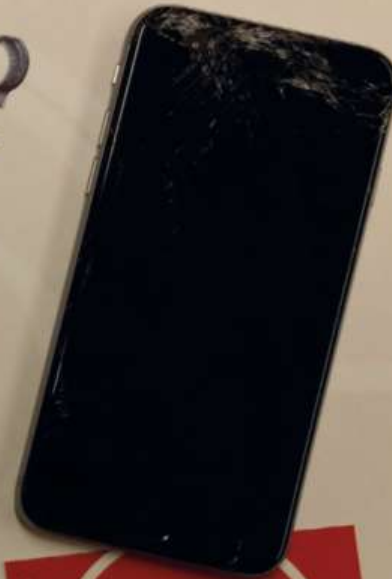
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